Contents

Foreword 4

The future is now 8

Futures design framework 16

Situate 22

Define the subject 30

Situate the playground 33

Search 38

Scope the search 46

Scan for signals 58

Sense 78

Integrate signals 86

Articulate insights 95

Scale 102

Imagine futures 110

Actualize the future 120

Iterate 130

Book of futures

a bespoke guide

we are all future designers

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Papirøen, Copenhagen, Denmark.

Foreword

What does the future look like? Probably one of the most important and timeless questions that civilisations and societies across the world have asked themselves throughout history.

It seems like the curiosity about what the future might bring is inherent to our human condition. Today the oracle is not confined only to the gods on a mountain top, and our inquiries are asking for more than prophetic predictions or divinations of an inevitable destiny. In these times of uncertainty and high-speed changes in all domains of life, prediction as such is no longer enough for the restless creative soul.

Most people might think that the opposite of uncertainty is certainty, when it is rather possibility and openness towards the unknown. Cultivating this new sense of awareness is exactly what *futures design* aims to inspire and ignite in individuals and organizations.

For the past four years, we at Bespoke, have experienced the power of futures design as a method and approach to navigate in uncertainty.

Through hundreds of different projects we have been lucky enough to work closely with courageous organizations from all kinds of industries and sectors, large and small, private and public, and from different corners of the world, helping them map, discover and unveil future landscapes of possibility in the intersection between business, design, strategy and art. These experiences, learnings and reflections are gathered in the publication that you are holding in your hands.

A first ersion of a futures method book called The *Creative Research Cookbook* was created in collaboration with our fellow practitioner Mathew Lincez during 2014, as a workbook for students at the Kaospilot school in Aarhus, Denmark. The book soon became a very useful manual for ourselves throughout our practise and in our projects, and turned out to be a valued gift for many of our clients, friends and partners. We quickly ran out of copies in our studio and instead of just reprinting it we decided to use the opportunity to refresh and rethink our method and approach.

In this new and updated version of our *Book of Futures*, we want to share the practises, beliefs, tools, stories, mindsets and methods that conform the foundation of our work with futures design.

This book is an invitation for you to play, explore and design the future, and to use it as a source of inspiration for the present.

We truly hope that it can inspire you to imagine and design new meaningful realities.

Nicolas Arroyo
Head of Foresight at Bespoke

Oh yeah,
for the
times
they are
a-changin'

Bob Dylan

the
future
is
now

It seems today that the future of everything is everywhere we look. At any given moment we are being bombarded with news and stories on the newest technological trend that promises to revolutionise the world and our lives. This new reality is generating unnecessary anxiety and fear for not being on top of the latest trendy thing.

Reality is that the future is much more complex, non-linear and tangled up than we think. Advancements and changing forces are not distributed equally, human needs are constantly evolving and the speed of these changes are faster than the majority of people and organizations can keep up with.

We might have the access to enormous amounts of data, numbers, figure , and information about the world, but that means nothing if we are not able to make sense of it and more importantly, use it to gain insight into what is possible. Insight that will help us imagine and actualize new scenarios, that can guide humanity to become the best version of itself.

The complexity is what makes futures design such an exciting and valuable discipline in these times of change. Futures design is not a crystal ball, through which we can prophesize on our destiny, but rather the fuel for creative thinking and doing. Future design is a powerful and proactive way to take advantage of our unpredictable world, encouraging us to meet this changing reality with high curiosity, imagination, and the desire to better illuminate the societal, environmental, and economic factors that otherwise are in the dark.

The future is not a distant, foreign place out of our reach, it is in its essence defined by our present dreams and actions. Let's bring the future back from tomorrow, into the *now*.

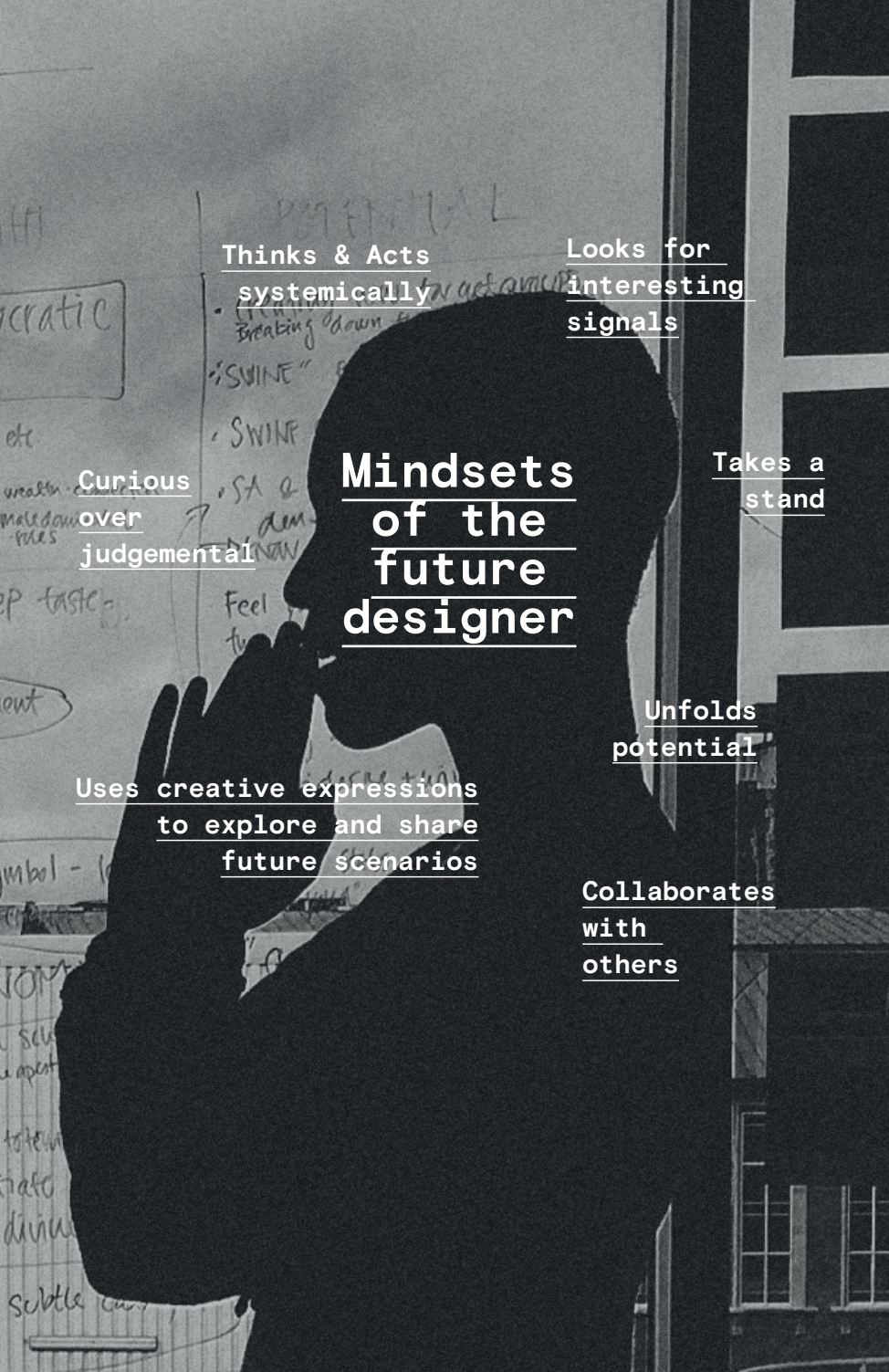
NOW

Become a future designer

Being a future designer means becoming a curious explorer seeking new perspectives in the search for potential. But it also means designing systemically, with purpose, and initiating action today to create a desirable tomorrow.

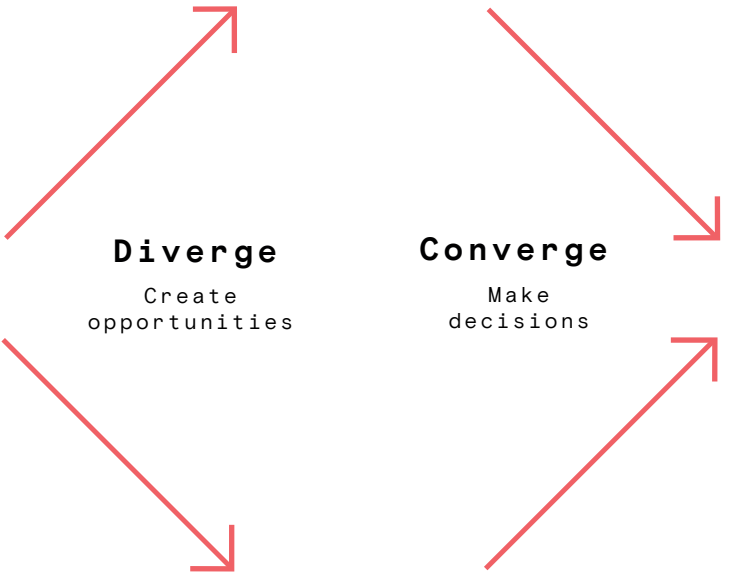
Whether you are shopping for groceries or articulating a new strategy for your organization you are affecting what is possible in the future. The future is continuously designed consciously or unconsciously through the conversations, experiences and actions of people.

Future designers are eager dreamers able to observe, map and make sense of the world around them. They use awareness and relatedness to the world, to form alternative future landscapes of possibility for themselves and their surroundings.


Thinks & Acts systemically
Looks for interesting signals
Mindsets of the future designer
Curious over judgemental
Takes a stand
Unfolds potential
Uses creative expressions to explore and share future scenarios
Collaborates with others

A rythm of creative thinking

Designing the future alone and with others relies on our ability to both openly explore the world, and extract the essence of our observations to create something new. The rhythm of divergent and convergent thinking is a rhythm of creating opportunities and making decisions, of opening up for new inputs and an abstract understanding of things, and closing in on concrete interpretations and articulations. The rhythm is essential to the creative process, and we invite you to adapt it as a rhythm of thinking, when you read this book, and in your work as a future designer.


Diverge
Create
opportunities
Converge
Make
decisions

Futures design framework

The futures design framework in this book offers future designers tools to translate their efforts into impact on the world. Through designing alternative future scenarios, we have the power to change what people consider possible. A new scenario changes one's perception of the current situation, and it enables people to have new conversations, see new possibility for action and ultimately design the future.

This framework presents four phases that allows you to steer the design process into a future facing direction. The following chapters will present the four phases starting with *situate*, as this phase is good for creating alignment, intention and expected outcomes of design projects. Going through the *search*, *sense* and *scale* phase will open our minds, redefine what is possible and ultimately change the situation. Iterations of the process simultaneously let future designers improve their craft and impact the world.

The futures design framework is

+ a structure to search for opportunity

+ an approach to strategic innovation

+ a method for creating organizational resilience and competitive advantage

+ a deliberate process of making sense of, and acting on changes in the environment

+ a way to explore the future through curiosity creating the foundation for innovation

+ an approach to collective exploration and innovation of a situation

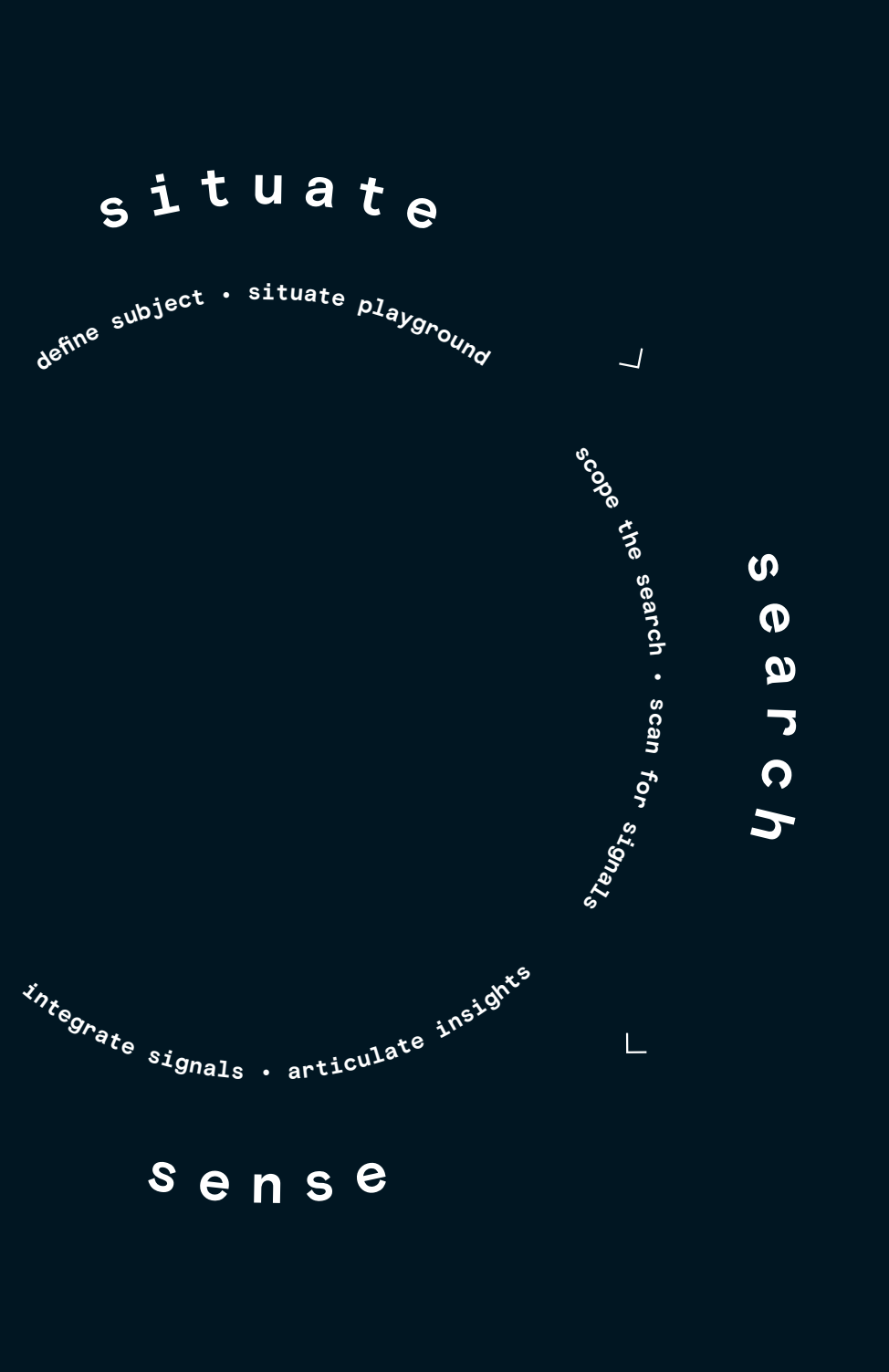
+ a tool to collect inspiration and information

+ a mindset for curiosity and inquiry

+ a culture that fosters exploration using a proactive mindset that encourages collaboration

scale

imagine futures • actualize the future


situate
define subject • situate playground
search
scope the search • scan for signals
sense
integrate signals • articulate insights

situate

Define the subject of study and the playground of your project.

In order to explore future horizons we must first understand the current situation we are in, the point from where we are looking forward. Understand the here and now, the space from where we explore and understand the initial questions and hypotheses that are driving our project. Define the subject that we wish to explore and align our team around, and the practicalities and frames that guide the project.

search

Explore, unravel and harvest relevant and inspiring signals of change.

When everything is uncertain, anything is possible. In the search phase, we look for signals that show glimpses of what futures might emerge. New technologies, behaviors, emerging cultures and sociopolitical forces of today, signal what is possible in the future. The search phase invites us to look for these signals in their emerging state, and capture the potential that may reside within them.

sense

Integrate signals, look for patterns and articulate insights.

Making sense of the collection of signals is the foundation for designing new futures. Sensing is the creation and interpretation of a map of all our collected data. Connecting signals with each other and integrating them with our previous understanding of the situation reveals new connections and enable us in uncovering a new sense of awareness. What emerges are insights that illuminates and articulates the unspoken future potential of our situation.

scale

Imagine, share and actualize new scenarios for the future.

Bring the future to life by entering an imaginative space where cognition meets the physical world in a creative manner. The scale phase invites us to use our insights from the previous phases as a foundation to imagine, share and actualize new scenarios for the future. This is the time to design actions, conversations and expe-riences that engage others in exploring inspiring visions, radical ideas, provoking thoughts and new possible scenarios. Speculation and imagination is the first step in actualizing the futur .

sit

uate

define subject • situate playground

time is an illusion

When the great Italian engineer Michele Besso died in 1955, his good friend Albert Einstein wrote in a letter to Michele's sister:

»*Michele has left this strange world a little before me. This means nothing. People like us, who believe in physics, know that the distinction made between past, present and future is nothing more than a persistent, stubborn illusion*«.

To explain what this means, Carlo Rovelli, writes in his book *Seven Brief Lessons on Physics*, about heat. Understanding the laws of thermodynamics is crucial to understanding the question of time. Rovelli exemplifies with a spoon that is placed in a cup of hot tea. Heat moves from hot things to cold things, but not vice versa, and therefore the spoon becomes hot. There is an exchange of heat over time. As soon as there is heat, the future is different from the past.

In every case where there is no exchange of heat, the future behaves exactly like the past. If there is no friction, a pendulum can swing forever, and the future of the pendulum is predictable. If there is friction, if there is heat, the pendulum will slow down, and we would be able to distinguish the future from the past. This means, the difference between the past and the future exists only when there is heat, and heat means friction, movement, change.

The change is not predictable though. Even for the tea spoon. It heats up because the tea and the spoon interact through a specific number of ariables. But the value of these variables is not enough to make a prediction of the future exactly. It is only enough to say that the tea with optimum probability will heat up the spoon. As unlogic as it sounds, it is not impossible that the tea will become hotter when the cold spoon is introduced, it is just extremely improbable.

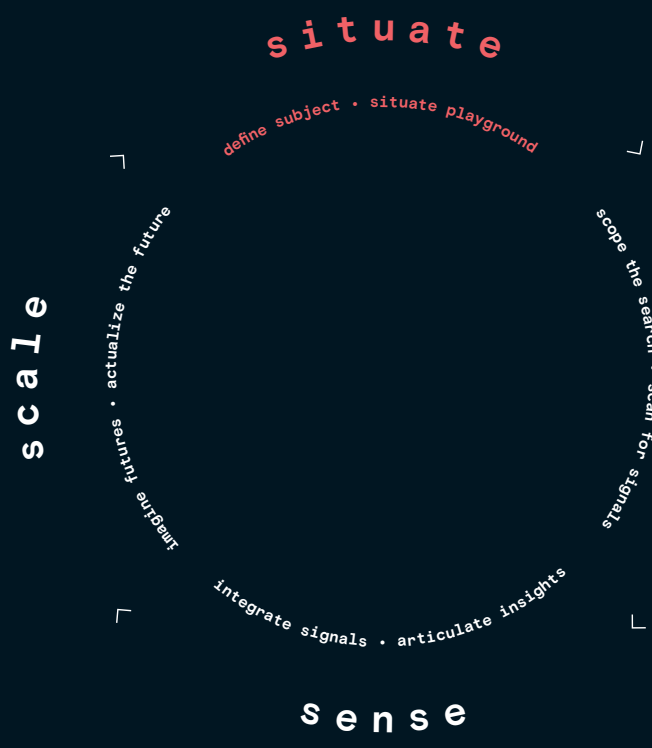
Modern physics suggests that the *now* is an illusion. That the universal fl w of time is a generalization that simply does not work. We say that the past no longer exists, and that the future does not yet exist. That only the things of the present exist. But there is nothing that corresponds to the notion of the *now* in physics. Confused? If you hold the *now* up against the *here*, it might help: The two words *here* and *now*, are indexical - they point to the context in which they occur. If things that are not *here* exist, then things that are not *now* should also exist.

What happens if you do not put the teaspoon in the tea? What if you leave it on the table and pour the tea over it? What if you choose to do something highly unpredictable? It is simple, your surroundings will change over the course of time. When you create friction, motion, action, you create change over time. You still cannot predict the future, but you can make changes that with a certain probability will change the future. With no motion, there is no distinction between past and future. There is stagnation.

The future is created where there is motion. By behaviour, conversation, interaction, culture, the future is constantly altered. And most of it is unconcious. If we dare to regard time as a whole, that we can manipulate, there is good news: Not only is the past and the present *now*. The future is *now*. And it belongs to those who move.

By looking at the future we can develop a better sense of context and possibility for the present.

Mathew Lincez
Futurist
Toronto, Canada


situate
define subject • situate playground
search
scope the search • scan for signals
sense
integrate signals • articulate insights
scale
imagine futures • actualize the future

Situate the here & now

Defining the *here* and *now* is an act of defining the situation we are in, and the future situation we dream of. Having a unified perspecti e on subject and frames for the design project is key to effective coordination of action and co-design of the future.

We use the term situation because of its neutrality as opposed to problem or opportunity and because it comes from *situs*, meaning *place*. To situate is to align on, and define the current situs, i.e. the *here* and *now* of the team and the challenge. In the *here* and *now* we have an interest, some available resources, a working culture, collective and individual dreams, etc.

All design projects start with team members that bring a multitude of resources and perspectives into the project, and the first task of the f - tures design process is to align on a formulation of the situation. Situating is sharing, defining and aligning on all those resources, themes and perspectives that form the foundation of the project. It is people moving from diverse sets of ideas and perspectives to gather around one shared situs for the coming design process.

In situating we distinguish between two sub phases where we *define the subjec* and *situate the playground*.

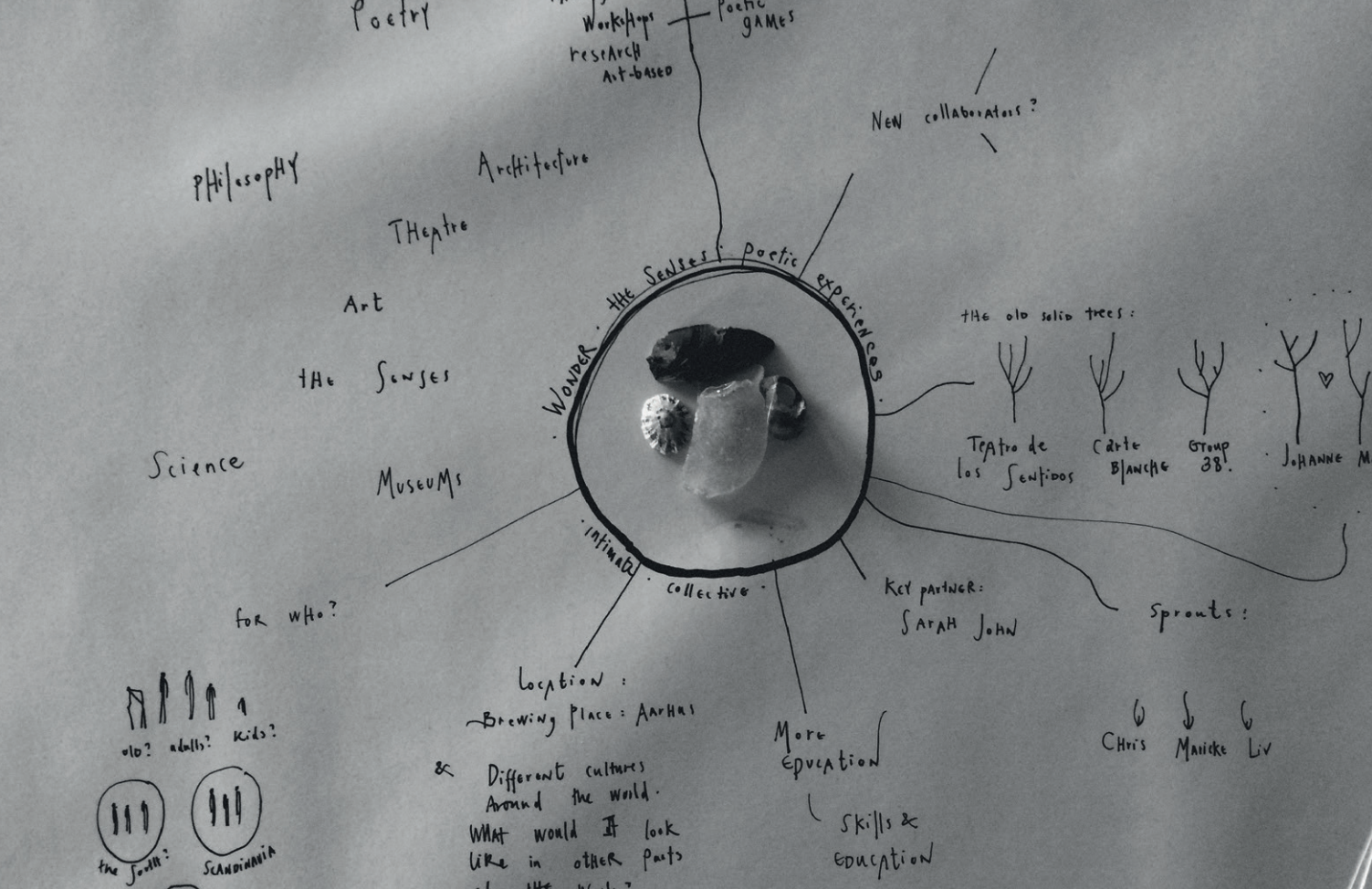
Define the subject

When we name something we instantly define it. Verbalizing the current situation as a subject, challenge, theme, research question or domain of exploration is the first step in initiating the futures design process.

Engaging people under the same guiding star in order to co-design, is what creates the foundation of a successful project. The first step in engaging people in a design process, is aligning around an attractive formulation of the subject of study.

The articulation of the subject will affect how we talk and feel about the project, and ultimately who will participate in the design process, and how. We aim to articulate the situation in a way that invites people to explore and collaborate on the project, and that inspires curiosity, creativity and playfulness.

The subject situation covers the domains and topics that the organization wants to explore and eventually master, this will mark the starting point of the futures design journey in a clear and comprehensive way.


Poetry
Workshops
research
Art-based
Poetic games
New collaborators?
Philosophy
Architecture
Theatre
Art
The Senses
Science
Museums
Wonder · the Senses · poetic experiences ·
· intimate · collective ·
the old solid trees:
Teatro de los Sentidos
Carte Blanche
Gtomp 38°.
Johanne
For who?
old? adults? kids?
the South?
Scandinavia
Location:
Brewing Place: Aarhus
& Different cultures Around the world.
What would it look like in other parts
Key partner:
Sarah John
More Education
Skills & Education
Sprouts:
Chris
Marieke
Liv

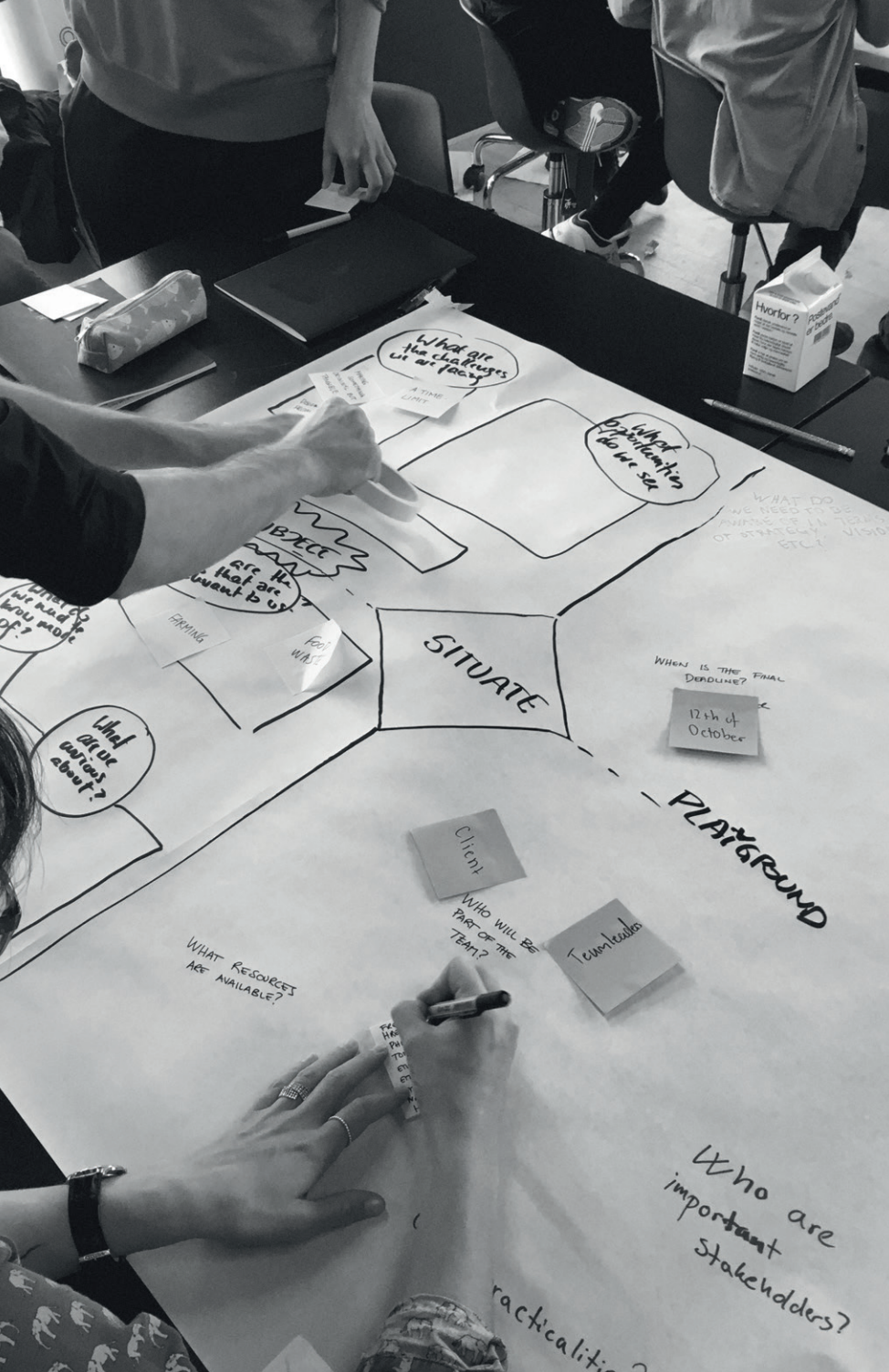
WHAT DO YOU THINK
WHEN WE SAY
CREATIVE SPACES?
VISUAL IDEAS
SPARK IMAGINATION

Situate the playground

Before embarking on our futures design journey we must understand the boundaries and characteristics of our domain of work, what we call *situating ourselves on the playground*. Mapping the resources, time and people committed to the project, helps us make sure that our work will translate into action and impact. When planning, we create an overview of the project in order to balance the resources and time allocation between the phases.

A too large focus on the scanning and sensing phase will create well grounded insights but leave insufficient time or translating them into new scenarios. Conversely too much focus on scaling will leave insufficient time or other phases, and insights will most likely be grounded in low quality observations or a very narrow scan of the environment. Estimate to go through the four phases at least once for a given situation and preferably more times, as each iteration both increases our sensibility towards the situation and the quality of each phase, and attracts more people to the project.

Situating the playground covers resources, time, working methods, approaches and other practicalities and will often be formulated as a working brief including timelines, intention, outcomes, contractual agreements, and the like.


What are the challenges we are facing
A time limit
What organization do we see
SITUATE
When is the final deadline?
12th of October
PLAYGROUND
Client
Who will be part of the team?
Teamleader
What resources are available?
Who are important Stakeholders?

Timeplan

PHASE

Main research
Exploring trends & future visions for industry

Week 42 | Week 43 | Week 44 | Week 45

Week 42
Project start

Week 44
Presentation of Main Research

Seco
Market rese
"To Who

In which areas/fields /industries do we see potential?

What opportunities do we see?

What challenges are we facing?

Subject ····· **Sit**

What do we need to know more of?

What are the topics that are relevant to us?

What are we curious about?

What outcomes should we have?

Who are important stakeholders?

What do we need to be aware of in terms of strategy, vision, etc?

uate ····· Playground

When is the final deadline?

Who will be part of the team?

Other practi-calities?

What resources are available?

sea

rch

horse shit

In 1898, delegates from across the globe gathered in New York City for the world's firs international urban planning conference. One topic dominated the discussion. It was not housing, land use, economic development, or infrastructure on the agenda. It was horseshit.

The streets of New York and of a lot of other big cities around the world, were reeking minefields of horseshit that had to be navigated with great care. So called *crossing sweepers* were standing around on street corners, and for a fee they would clear a path through the mire for pedestrians. Wet weather turned the streets into swamps of muck, while dry weather made the manure turn to dust, which was then whipped up by the wind, inhaled by pedestrians and covering buildings. Vacant lots in cities across America became piled high with huge amounts of horseshit.

In 1894, four years before the conference was held, a New York prognosticator concluded that by 1930 the horse droppings would rise to Manhattan's third-story windows. The Times of London estimated that by 1950 every street in the city would be buried three meters deep in horseshit. The future of the big cities looked dark.

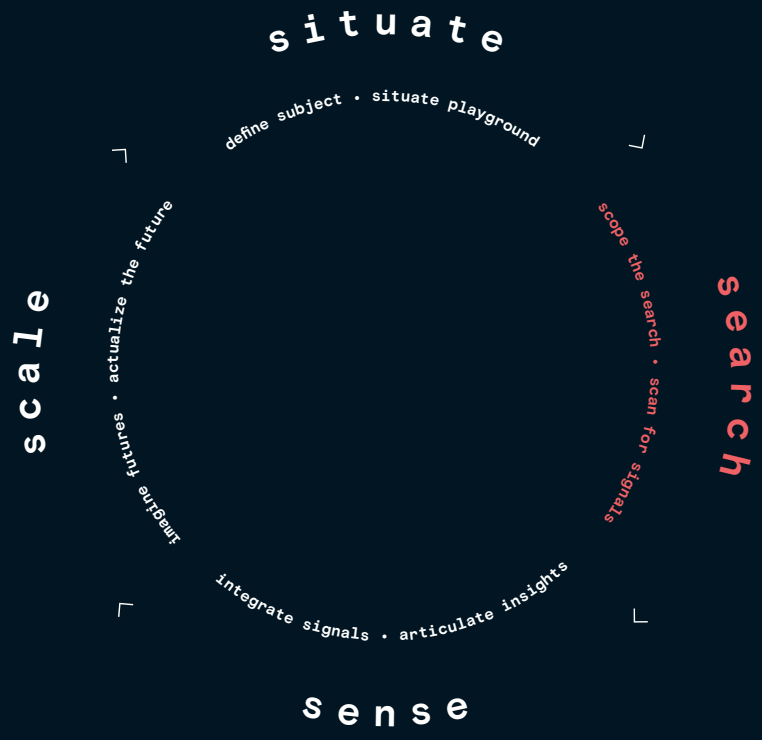
In 1886, more than ten years before the horseshit conference, german engineer Carl Friedrich Benz had build the world's firs working automobile, available to the public. In 1908, what is regarded as the first af ordable car, Ford Model T, was launched. Cars quickly became cheaper to own and operate than horse-drawn vehicles, both for the individual and for society. In 1900, 4,192 cars were sold in the US; by 1912 that number had risen to 356,000, meaning that on the streets of New York, there were more cars than horses for the first tim .

So why were Carl Friedrich's motors not on the agenda at the conference? Opening up toward what was happening in the world outside of the conference and the streets of New York, would have been infinitely more effecti e than to extrapolate on the present and calculate on horseshit. Looking back, this seems obvious, but the truth is that we still talk about the problems we are facing right now.

Circumstances can change dramatically over the course of time. We do not know that some teenager in sweatpants is already solving our problem from a laptop, and that in a couple years, our problem is not a problem anymore. When it feels like we are knee deep in horseshit, we need to look up, and explore what is happening outside of our own present and our own closed reality, explore the diverse landscape of possibility.

Thinking about the future
is essential, but not
in the way it's often
being defined:
it's necessary for
designers to move away
from the idea of one
"given" future which needs
to be "predicted" or
"discovered" to the idea
of multiple possible
futures which are all
simultaneously "made" in
the present.

Nicolay Boyadiev
Strelka Institute for Media,
Architecture & Design
Moscow, Russia


situate
define subject • situate playground
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scope the search • scan for signals
sense
integrate signals • articulate insights
scale
imagine futures • actualize the future

Search for signals

The *search phase* is about meeting the world with curiosity and interest. It is about actively gathering data with the intention of transforming it into new ideas, scenarios, concepts and strategies for the future.

The word search is rooted in the Latin word *circare* meaning *to go around*. When we search we are going around the situation in order to understand it better. We search in the situational context to identify artefacts, narratives and behaviors related to the situation, and to assess their potential for making change. We call our observations signals, because they are signals of potential change.

In searching we distinguish between two sub phases where we *scope the search* and *scan for signals.*

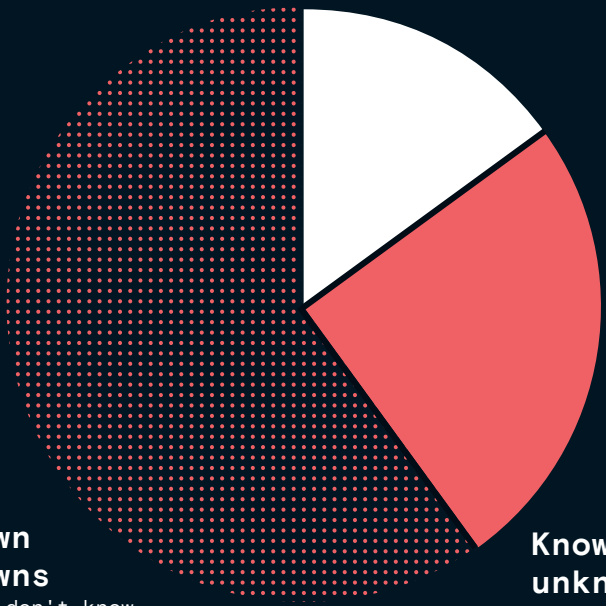
Scope the search

When scoping, we aim to define where to sear h for signals of change. Scoping is the creation of a strategy for the search, and making sure to cover all chosen areas of interest. The scope serves as an action map and guiding compass for scanning.

Scoping aims to identify domains related to the situation, and help searching for topics within these domains, that can shape and inspire the design process. Through scoping, the project team will articulate and share perspectives, judgements, ideas and knowledge related to the situation, and use this as a guide for where to scan for signals.

The main objective of scoping is the articulation of current knowledge and topics related to the situation. We distinguish between three types of knowledge, known knowns, known unknowns and unknown unknowns. We use what we know, and our curiosity to guide us into the unknown.

Known knowns
What you know, you know.



Unknown unknowns
What you don't know, you don't know.

Known unknowns
What you know, you don't know.

Domains of exploration

We use a model that we call *the scope wheel* (p. 53) to visualize and work with the scope. We divide the context of the situation into a few domains of interest and aim to exhaust each domain with topics more or less relevant to the situation.

The domains of interest serves to focus our search on what will most likely change the situation, or where we find the most potential or inspiring our design process. Keywords from the situating phase can serve as a basis for deciding what domains are most important.

To inspire a wider search, models like the business analysis framework STEEPV can be used. Each letter of the STEEPV will constitute one domain and we fill out ea h of them with topics relevant for the situation.

The STEEPV domains: Social, Technological, Economical, Environmental, Political and Value-based issues

Spaces of relevance

Closest to the core of the subject and at the centre of our scope wheel we find the topics most relevant to the situation, and closer to the periphery the topics are less relevant. Outside the periphery are those topics we deem irrelevant to the subject of study. In-between we define three spaces to guide and calibrate our search strategy.

Core space

The immediate context of the situation and state-of-the-art within the subject

Core topics are those we need to explore in the search phase to get a basic understanding of our situation. Learning about the main stakeholders, terminologies, technologies, issues relevant to the situation is core to changing it. If we are aiming to design scenarios of incremental change or if the project in other ways is somewhat conservative, we will focus on searching for signals close to the core. This allows us to create a well grounded foundation for successful navigation of business-as-usual.

Adjacent space

Areas of knowledge, practices and vocabularies complementary to the situation

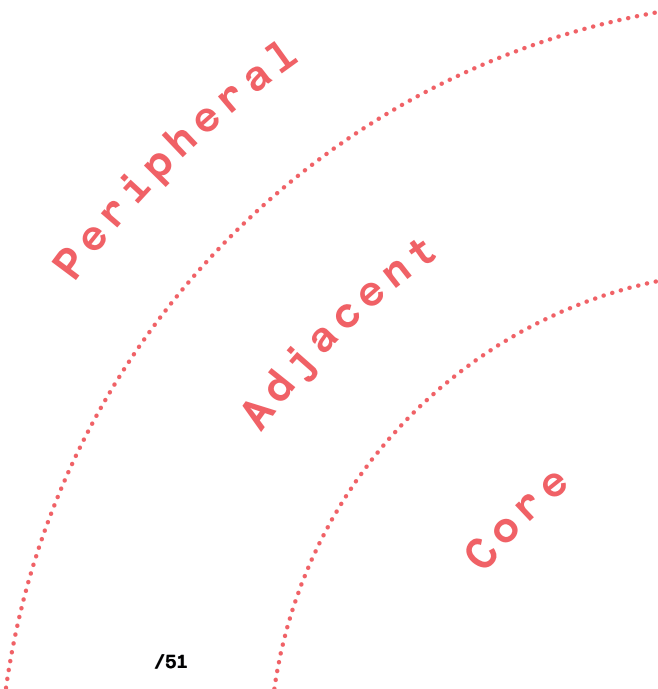
The adjacent space holds complimentary subjects, contexts, practices, organizations or perspectives that are not core to the situation but that embody or demonstrate elements that can inspire or easily be tracked back to the situation. In the adjacent space we learn from the behaviors and contexts of actors outside of our traditional operational context and boundaries. The adjacent is where we find signals that challenge the status quo and can inform a more radical foundation for scenario making.

Peripheral space

The foreign, unfamiliar, radical and more unexplored perspectives

The peripheral space sits beyond what is recognized as familiar, compatible or adjacent to the situation. The peripheral space is outside the comfort zone and is where only few organizations focus their attention; yet this is where we can find n w opportunities, ideas, threats and events that can suddenly disrupt a whole

industry or paradigm of thought. Our ability to look past the core and adjacent spaces into and towards the periphery requires the courage and ability to alter perspectives, learn about unfamiliar topics, challenge conventional behaviors and assumptions, and recognize and interpret latent signals.



Fill out the scope wheel

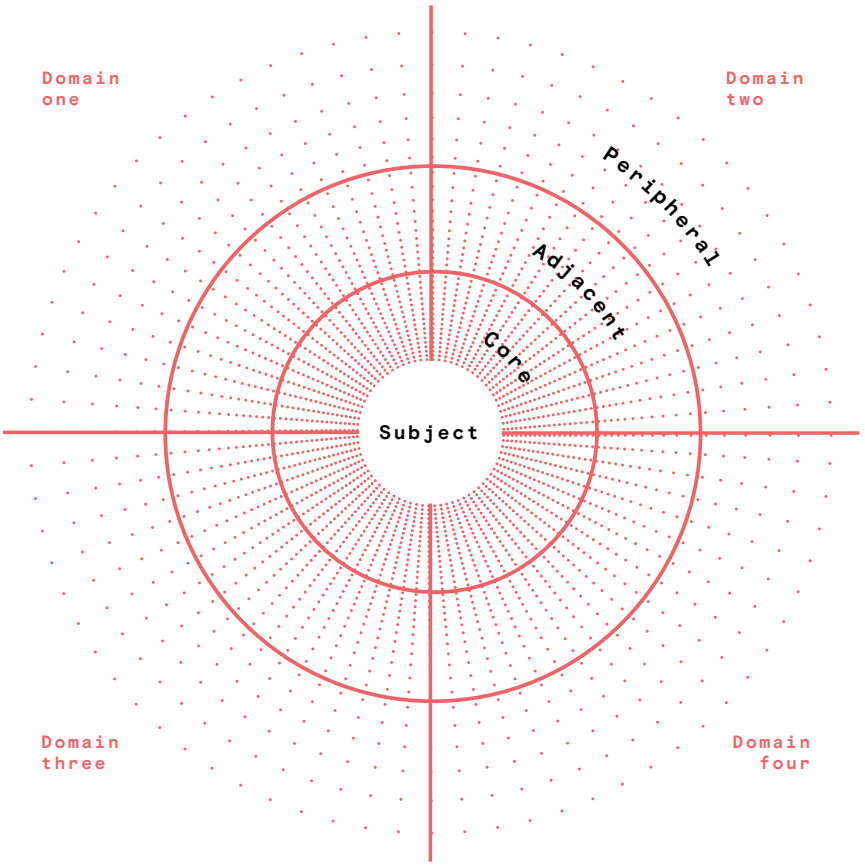
+ Draw the scope wheel on a large piece of paper with your formulation of the subject in the centre.

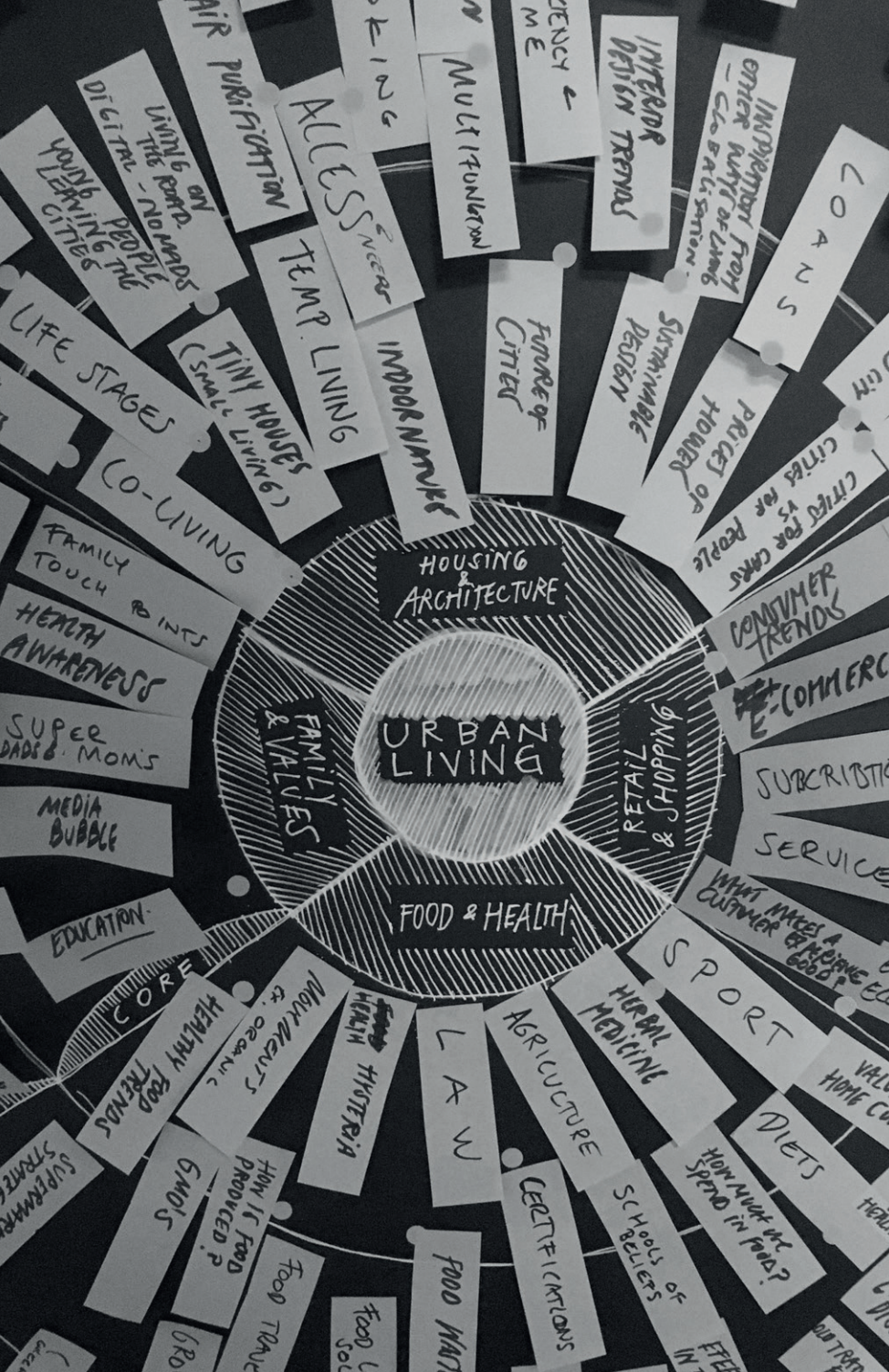
+ Divide it into the domains you want to search in and learn from.

+ Write down all the topics you can think of and place them on the scope wheel. Use sticky notes, so you can adjust the scope later if needed.

+ Distribute the topics according to their relevance to the situation.

+ Decide on a strategy for the search by prioritizing which topics to focus on.


Domain one
Domain two
Peripheral
Adjacent
Core
Subject
Domain three
Domain four


HOUSING & ARCHITECTURE
FAMILY & VALUES
RETAIL & SHOPPING
FOOD & HEALTH
URBAN LIVING
CORE
LIFE STAGES
CO-LIVING
FAMILY TOUCH POINTS
HEALTH AWARENESS
SUPER DADS & MOM'S
MEDIA BUBBLE
EDUCATION
TINY HOUSES (SMALL LIVING)
TEMP. LIVING
INDOOR NATURE
FUTURE OF CITIES
SUSTAINABLE DESIGN
PROUD HOUSE
CITIES FOR CARS VS CITIES FOR PEOPLE
CONSUMER TRENDS
E-COMMERCE
SUBSCRIPTION
SERVICES
SPORT
DIETS
HOW MUCH DO WE SPEND IN FOOD?
SCHOOLS OF BELIEFS
CERTIFICATIONS
FOOD WASTE
LAW
AGRICULTURE
HERBAL MEDICINE
FOOD HYSTERIA
ALIMENTS & ORGANIC
HEALTHY FOOD TRENDS
GMO'S
HOW IS FOOD PRODUCED?
FOOD TRACE
INTERIOR DESIGN TRENDS
MULTIFUNCTION
ACCESS
AIR PURIFICATION
LIVING ON THE ROAD - NOMADS
DIGITAL PEOPLE LEAVING THE CITIES
YOUNG

ENABLE PEOPLE TO DESIGN SIGNIFICANT & MEANINGFUL NEW REALITIES
MINDSET
SKILLS
TOOLS
AGENCY?
BELIEFS
WHAT WE BELIEVE?

Be a curious explorer

Curiosity is the spark behind every great idea. Being a curious explorer is all about making new connections between different and unrelated things, about wondering, daydreaming, sparking new ideas and approaching the unthinkable.

As a future designer, being able to constantly stimulate your creative brain and find inspir - tion anywhere and everywhere, in every corner of the city or from the fascinating depths of the internet, is the key to being exposed to new ideas and thoughts that can challenge our worldview.

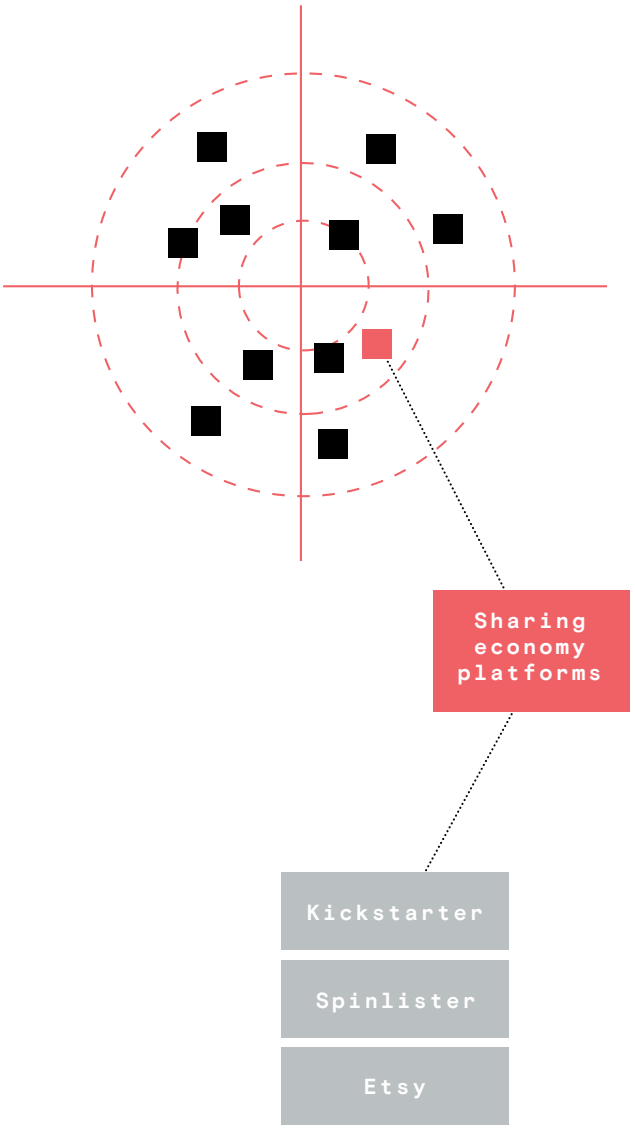
We should always cultivate genuine curiosity about the state of the world, about what is happening in different industries, fields and sector , and we should be able to spot the challenges and opportunities that technology, politics, the environment and the economy can offer us today. These complex contexts around us are our main source of inspiration. Be the person who starts conversations, the one who asks questions, makes connections and geeks out about new ideas.

Scan for signals

When scanning, we aim to develop a foundation of information and inspiration about present and emerging opportunities, challenges, threats relevant to the situation. We use the practice of scanning to build a more robust language, literacy and vocabulary, and to identify emerging sociocultural trends, behaviors and values. The aim of scanning is the collection of signals of change, relevant to the situation and the topics in the scope wheel. The quality of the scan is primarily defined by the quantity of signals, as more signals will provide a higher resolution image of the final scan map.

While quantity is key for scanning, time/resources must also be considered in choosing how to search for and harvest the signals. A short search phase will likely revolve around a web search or a few conversations within one's existing network, while a large and resourceful project will allow designers to do literature reviews of peer-reviewed articles, interviews with leading experts, surveys, ethnographic observations, and more. Traditional scientific research methods can be of great help in identifying signals, but designers should also become inspired and informed by impressions, emotions, thought experiments and the like.

In practice scanning involves taking topics from the scope wheel and searching for signals associated with that topic.


Sharing economy platforms
Kickstarter
Spinlister
Etsy

Signals

Signals are concrete and observable occurrences that show change or the potential of change. Signals make up the data that creates the foundation of information and inspiration for the further design process. Signals can be actual events, technologies, behaviors, perspectives, etc., that show potential to alter the situation or elements of the context and thereby indirectly change the situation. A signal is not just a trend or a fact, it might be a weak indication of an emerging trend or signify the advent of a new technology.

In the search for and harvest of signals we will make observations of what the signal is, and interpret what potential for change it carries. By collecting and harvesting a lot of signals, we can develop an awareness of emerging trends, drivers, values, cultures before they are established as trends.

Signals are the tip of the iceberg and underneath we find all the things that ma es the signal possible. To explore what is underneath the surface, ask yourself:

What makes this signal possible?
What potential impact does this signal carry?

signal
trends
values
drivers
behaviours
technology

A weak signal is a factor for change hardly perceptible at the present, but which will constitute a strong trend in the future.

Michelle Codet

Types of scanning

When scanning, we distinguish between desktop and immersive scanning techniques.

Desktop scanning we can do by ourself from the comfort of our desk, and it involves the exploration and interpretation of previously gathered and curated data and information. This is an easily accessible method for collecting large quantities of signals and thereby gaining a basic overview of the situation and its context.

Immersive scanning is centered around the more active observation and interpretation of the surroundings. Go into the field to question individuals and make observations of behaviors, artefacts and narratives in a sociocultural context. Immersion is a conversation between the observer and the context, and it enhances the thickness of the data allowing the observer to explore deeper and richer perspectives of each signal. Informal conversations with experts will often be the fastest way to identify the most important topics within an area, while structured interviews or ethnographic observations consumes a lot of time and resources from projects.

How we scan and the source of the signals determines both the quality and quantity of the signals.

Desktop scanning

The usual suspect

+ Google searches
+ Newspapers
+ Scientific articles
+ Documentaries
+ MOOCs
+ TED talks
+ Podcasts
+ Trend reports

The radicals

+ Industry magazines
+ Phd theses
+ Niche interest magazines
+ Literature reviews
+ Blogs by industry leaders
+ Art reviews
+ Google trends

Immersive scanning

The usual suspect

+ Expert interviews
+ Focus groups
+ Site visits
+ Ethnographic observations
+ Conversations
+ Surveys

The radicals

+ Workshops
+ Prototyping
+ Pretotyping
+ Artistic research
+ A/B testing
+ Product testing
+ Empathy maps

Go down the rabbit hole

When Alice enters the rabbit hole in Lewis Carroll's famous book about Wonderland, she stumbles into an unknown adventure, a journey of getting lost and exploring new worlds. She is taken through diverse dimensions by curiosity and a force of deep immersion. She follows the signs without knowing exactly where to go, and meanwhile discovers previously unseen characters and cultures. Because she followed the rabbit, she went to places where no one went before.

We use this analogy of Alice to illustrate that the search phase is about following the signals and getting lost in the unknown, it is following the rabbit to explore the full potential of a topic. Don't be afraid of getting lost in unknown places, this is where new knowledge and insight might live without us knowing.

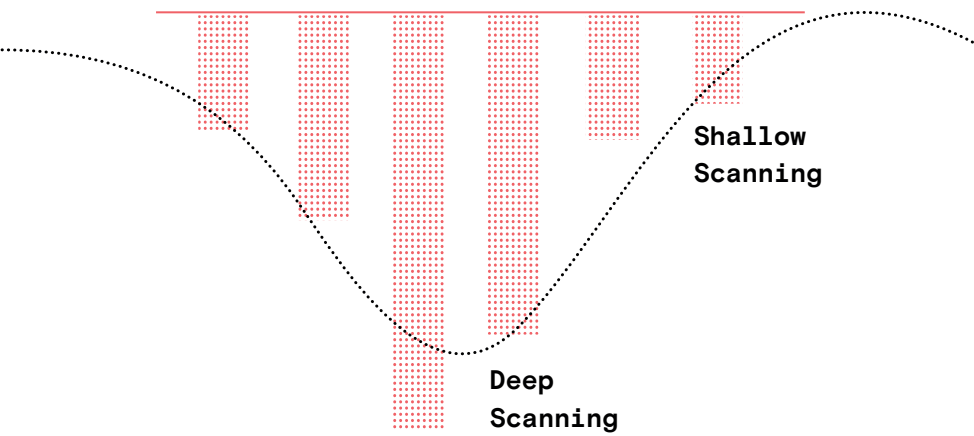
Each topic in the scope wheel is an access point to a vast amount of signals and examples. By going into the topic, finding signals and figurin out what enables them to emerge, we are able to access formerly unknown areas of knowledge. When learning about a signal, we can look into all the contextual factors that makes it possible. Each of these factors are potential signals of

change relevant to the situation. It is the task of the future designer to dig into the signals, while still making sure to follow the strategy and cover all relevant topics in the scope wheel.

Looking for the reactions and counter-reactions, trends, technologies, lifestyles, etc. that lie behind the signals, allows us to identify new signals. Exploring the depths of the rabbit hole lets us uncover a universe of unknown unknowns.

Shallow scanning
Finding concrete examples related to the topic and asking "what other examples/cases are out there?"

Deep scanning
Exploring what lies behind a signal and asking "what other forces/drivers are making this possible?"



Eat
Drink
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STORYTELLING #FARMING
ANTIC.
HEESY
le around food
PRODUCTIVITY
FOOD & HEALTH / #NEWGENERATION
THE FOOD TRU
GENERAT
The new generation wants to build and
RELEVANCE
DESCRIPTION
Cathrine Frederiksen / Food Trend Expert / ALIKELIHOOD
The new generation (Millennials and GenZ) are looking for something practical and concrete.
In a world of digital screens everywhere a lot of them are longing for experiences that are tangible and that can stimulate their creativity and social life. The food truck culture is offering an experimental platform to experience with food, diversity, culture, creativity and entrepreneurship-

The New York Times

Wednesday, December 2, 2015 | Today's Paper | Video | 48°F | Dow -0.15%

S Dream of
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NOTEBOOK
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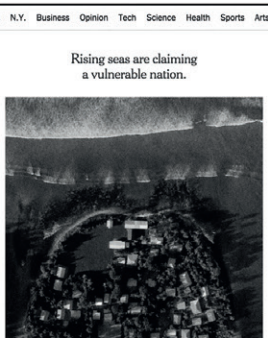

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Watching

2h

Wildlife

World on track t
animals by 2020

Living Planet Index shows verteb
1970 levels unless urgent action

Damian Carrington
@dpcarrington

Thursday 27 October 2016 00.53 BST

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lose two-thirds of wild major report warns

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INDEPENDENT

ANTHROPOCENE

Plastic, not so fantastic: How we are trashing planet Earth

There are 500 times more pieces of microplastic in the sea than there are stars in our galaxy and by 2050 it is estimated there will be more plastic than fish

New species discovered every tw days in Amazon

Pandas could be wiped despite signs of recover study warns

World facing first mass extinction of wildlife sin the dinosaurs

Is this the end of the Holocene period?

Harvest the signals

We use notes, pictures and visual memories to help us remember and use the signals in the further process. Sticky notes are a very useful tool in many creative processes, but often we need a more comprehensive format to document and share signals over time, and use them in meaningful ways in a collective setting. We use scan cards to document signals in words and images and to make the first round of interpretation of each signal's relevance to the situation.

Basic elements of the scan card

01. Title: Name the signal.
02. Image: Include a picture or illustration that shows/symbolize the signal visually.
03. Description: What is this? Explain it.
04. Relevance: Why is this relevant for your situation?
05. Source: Where did you get this information?

Additional elements of the scan card

06. Domain tags: What part of the scope wheel does this come from?
07. Subtitle: Make a one-liner for the signal.
08. Potential: What future does this signal make possible?

Domain tag / #hashtags #about #signal

Title

Subtitle: Make a one-liner for the signal

Description

What is this signal?

Relevance

Why is this relevant for your situation?

Potential

What future does this signal make possible?

Source

Where did you get this information?

RETAIL & SHOPPING / #NEXTGEN FAMILY & VALUES /

OPEN SOURCE IDENTITY

Nowadays, You can't generalize.

DESCRIPTION "Television let us see the 'Global Village', but the internet let us be actual villagers." - Paul Jones, professor at University of North Carolina Highlighted in the S/S 16 Consumer Forecast, traditional identifiers (race, gender, sexuality) are collapsing at an accelerated rate; interracial marriage is reaching unprecedented levels globally, formalised genderneutral pronouns are becoming commonplace and sexual orientations are expanding daily. As society becomes label-less, both individuality and inclusivity are key consumer priorities, offline and online. A 'no walled-gardens' mindset – a desire for open-platform technology able to communicate regardless of network or application – is also permeating into 'real life', with consumers being increasingly open to new ideas and lifestyles. Clement Chau, manager at Developmental Technologies Research Group, says online access has "increased cultural, social and intellectual tolerance" globally. Though the internet has a dark side (online bullying, the rapid spread of extremism), open access to various social, religious and ethnic groups is on the whole creating greater tolerance. Online connectivity is driving consumers to celebrate their lifestyles without excluding others. In 2017, three million people are planning to attend World Pride Day in Madrid, which will include a 'Family Village' and daily sporting competitions. Sports remain a key equaliser; the 2017 World Outgames (the largest to date), will be a 10-day event with 450 competitions for athletes regardless of sexuality or gender. Another key event will be the 2017 Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions, which anticipates over 10k interfaith activists from 80 countries meeting to collaborate on ways to address humanitarian issues through shared best practices.

RELEVANCE

- Who are we building for and how can we connect with them?
- How do we use the next generation's flexible mindset to spread the word?
- What statement do we need to make in the world?

SOURCE *WGSN 2017 Consumer and Design Trend Report*

FOOD & HEALTH / #TREND #HEALTH #CONSUMER #KNOWLEDGE

CITY PEOPLE HYSTERIA

People living in urban areas are more likely to be picky and over think what they eat.

DESCRIPTION

Cathrine Frederiksen / Food Trend Expert / ALIKELIHOOD

City people is becoming hyper aware of what they eat and where it comes from. In the contrary, people from the countryside are more "relaxed" towards certain food parameters trending in cities at the moment - such as organic, free range, biodynamic, etc- They know the farmers, they have a relationship with them, they see these farms every day and they know that conditions maybe be not as bad as those pictured in cities, based on very little information.

RELEVANCE

- How to inform and educate people about what is really going on with our food?
- Is our project an only-for-cities kind of solution?
- What do our "hysterical" target group really need to know?
- How do we make this not another cause of stress for those living in cities?

SOURCE *Berlinger Newspaper*

Scan card examples

FOOD & HEALTH / #STORYTELLING #FARMING

GO ROMANTIC, GO CHEESY

Romantic Storytelling is key to engage people around food.

DESCRIPTION

Cathrine Frederiksen / Food Trend Expert / ALIKELIHOOD

People want to have a closer relationship with their food.
They want to know where it comes from: Is it local? Organic? what does it contain?, who was the farmer? How was it produced? where was the farm?
They want to know and fall in love with the story behind what they eat, so bringing the old romantic idea of where food comes from is key to engage and attract people.

RELEVANCE

- What is the romantic story behind the project?
- How can we articulate a narrative around the whole product and its production?
- Who is the face of the project? What does she/he stands for?

SOURCE *Skype Interview with Cathrine Frederiksen. Founder of Alikelihood, a Copenhagen-based food rend research studio / www.alikelihood.com*

HOUSING & ARCHITECTURE / #NATURE #WORK #CONNECTIVITY

CO-LIVING & WORKING NATURE RETREAT

Digitally connected retreat in the Himalayan mountains

DESCRIPTION

Pankhasari Retreat (development started sep 2016)
A co-living & working space surrounded by waterfalls, a fast-moving river and one of the world's tallest mountains, Kanchenjunga – it will offer high-speed internet and teleworking facilities in collaborative architecture, opened to the influence of people from different backgrounds and with different skills. Buildings will be constructed from local materials – including stone, farmed teak and sissoo wood. "We wanted to oppose both architectural choices that are indifferent to their geographical context, and any uncritical cult of a local tradition" said the designer Carlo Ratti. The lightweight structures will be easy to dismantle, ensuring the resort has a minimal impact on the landscape.

RELEVANCE

- Connectivity in deserted places.
- Co-creation with shared values/interests.
- Connection to nature
- Work-turism

SOURCE *http://www.dezeen.com/2016/09/02/pankhasari-retreat-carlo-ratti-michele-bonino-himalayan-mountains-digitally-connected-india/*

When scan cards are not enough

A good way of painting a wider picture of our subject of study is by collecting artefacts, objects and visual references that speak about the subject not only intellectually or visually, but also tactile and through other senses.

Look for the artefacts of culture, everyday objects, symbolisms, visuals, etc.

中止させて頂きます
TICKET VENDOR
豚骨 PUSH
濃厚豚骨 二番釜 750円 PUSH
限定50食 重厚豚骨 三番釜 750円 PUSH
トッピング
とろ〜り味玉 110円
きくらげ 110円
ねぎ 150円
ちゃーしゅー 300円
PUSH
定番セット！
明太子ごはんセット
1000円 PUSH
替え玉 PUSH
120円
やっぱコレでしょ！
明太子ごはん 280円 PUSH
半ライス 120円 PUSH

半熟 ゆでたまご
FamilyMart collection

Organic Mushroom Nutrition
Om
IMMUNE
YOUR IMMUNE DEFENSE
CERTIFIED 100% ORGANIC MUSHROOM POWDER
VEGAN · GLUTEN FREE · NON GMO · FERMENTED
50
DIETARY SUPPLEMENT POWDER
Net Weight 100 grams (3.57oz)

se

nse

integrate signals • articulate insights

pink mushrooms reading books

Six shiny pillars metallically dropping from a grid of wires and artificial light ab ve. The hovering skeleton of a room inside a room. Firm pink clouds perfectly penetrating the polished surface. These are the physics of swedish artist Oskar Koliander's work *Intelligo*. As we walk under the installation, Oskar Koliander takes out his phone, checking the time. Looks up and says, *»here it comes«*.

A quiet white steam exiting wet rubber tubes, headed for the product of his installation - a pink oyster mushroom, slowly growing from the carefully carved holes in the stainless steel constructions, surrounding us.

We meet at Oskar Koliander's studio in the Royal Danish Art Academy. It is a supreme mess. It is the exact opposite of the clinic creation hanging in one of the tall white rooms of the museum on the other side of the courtyard. The artwork *Intelligo* is Oskar Koliander's visual representation of two topics that have been invading his thoughts for a long time now. The first one is data-i - fusion of DNA. Computer scientists at Columbia University recently succeeded in storing large amounts of data in DNA, and reading it again. Oskar Koliander pushes back a pile of notebooks, electronic devices, and tiny tools on his desk, and carefully puts down a handful of his freshly harvested pink oyster mushrooms. He explanes that the second thing this installation is rooted in, is tendencies such as body hacking and polyphasic sleeping. These topics are, what initiated the thought pattern behind *Intelligo* - an art installation that illustrates a data-infusion of great literature into the DNA of the pink oyster mushroom. When the mushroom is harvested, they are packed, and put into a refrigerator as part

of the installation, with labels saying James Joyce *Ulysses* or E. H. Gombrich *Story of Art*. This is the physical representation of the idea, that we can actually eat and digest data-infused mushroom, and who knows, in some years maybe unzip the information with our body and store it in our brain, and thereby learn by eating.

Oskar Koliander describes the initial phases of his work process, as rhizomatic thought patterns. Thoughts appear and when they have been haunting him for long enough, he simply can't deny them. Over time, as he researches and begins giving form to his thoughts at his studio, two or more ideas that seem to have absolutely nothing in common begin touching. New connections slowly start to show themselves to him. If the connection strengthens, Oskar Koliander starts working hard on versions of a physical manifestation of what comes out of the touch of the topics. At some point the concept stands clear for itself as a new creation. A creation rising from the connection between seemingly unrelated phenomenons.

In order to
preserve the
present we must
learn from the past.
In order to
improve the
present we must
design better futures
- that is how we
evolve as
individuals,
as society
and as a species.

Natasha Friis Saxberg
Head of Future Growth at Atea
Copenhagen, Denmark

situate
define subject • situate playground
search
scope the search • scan for signals
sense
integrate signals • articulate insights
scale
imagine futures • actualize the future

Sense the potential

We make sense of the world around us through the sensory inputs we perceive. Depending on what inputs make sense to us, we make interpretations of meaning and articulate our perception, thoughts and intentions in language and actions. Sensing is an essential faculty of what it means to be human.

To make sense of the signals means to map, prioritize and explore the potential within the collected data. We want to use the signals and their interrelatedness to learn more about the situation and the potential that lies ahead. Through exploration of the signals we are able to gain a new sense of awareness. When this awareness has been adequately verbalized and framed in a way that intuitively makes sense, we call it an insight.

Sensing is an act of integrating our previous knowledge with the collection of signals. It is both analysing the signals to make better distinctions and synthesizing data to create something new. While some signals might have obvious similarities, it is often the hidden connections that carry the most potential for articulating interesting insights.

In sensing we distinguish between two sub phases where we *integrate signals* and *articulate insights*.

Integrate signals

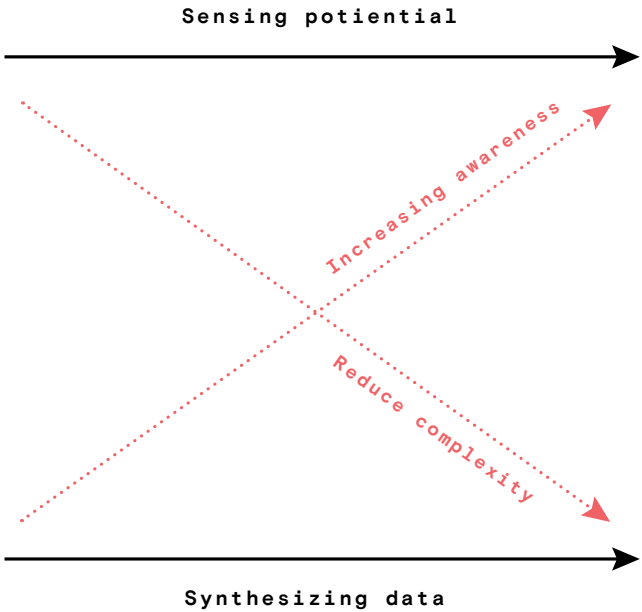
Arranged as a pile of scan cards, signals are an abstract mess. Their relation to each other and their combined potential for changing the situation is yet to be uncovered. By integrating the underlying meaning and potential of the signals with each other and our previous understanding of the situation, we create something new: A comprehensive map of signals that helps us navigate the complexity of the situation.

Making the signals physical as scan cards allow us to have a conversation with each other and the subject that is visually and physically represented. When we move, organize and play with scan cards on a floor or a all, they form patterns and clusters that represent a new awareness. The physicality of signals enables us to use more senses in the sense making process, and circumventing the limitations of our current vocabulary and understanding. *Visualization*, *organization* and *prioritization* of the signals in the scan map allow us to separarate the process of understanding and the articulation of insights.

Visualization is about producing accessible and compelling visual maps of signals, clusters, and themes that can easily be communicated and shared with the team and other stakeholders. The visual nature of scan cards and of scan maps provides us with recognizable cues for the sensing process.

Organization is about establishing clear boundaries to think and play within, and to connect the dots by defining relationships and connections between signals and themes. *What clusters of signals do we see? What are recurrent themes? What are keywords to define/name these groups?*

Prioritization is about determining what clusters and themes are most crucial to include in the development of the project, and where they fit in relation to one anothe . *Which theme(s) show relevance and importance? What can you get rid of?*



Connecting scan cards in the scan map shapes clusters that symbolize a new sense of awarensess. The parallel motion of synthesizing the physical data and sensing the potential is a physical and cognitive process of learning and reducing complexity. Integrating the signals is essential to learning about the situation and what potential it holds for designing new futures.

The ability to simplify means to eliminate the unnecessary so that the necessary may speak.

Hans Hoffman

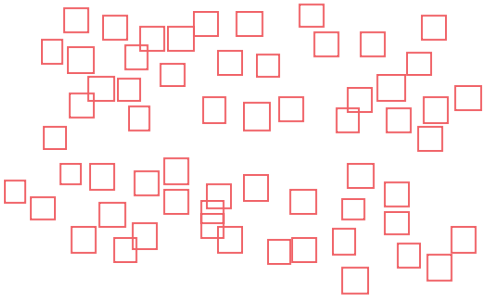
Build the scan map

The action of printing scan cards and organizing them in clusters is the physical equivalent of sensing. Integrating multiple signals to form themes creates a map of the future potential that exists. Each cluster represents a new sense of awareness to be articulated as an insight.

Step 01
Scan cards are unsorted, no patterns exists. Start sharing with collaborators what scan cards mean, and why they are relevant. Make sure to use the scan card and the image to communicate what the signal is about.

Step 02
Scan cards are organised into clusters. Name the theme of each cluster. What are the signals talking about as a whole?

Step 03
Scan cards are organised and prioritised further to form clusters relevant to the situation. Articulate an insight statement to capture the meaning of each cluster.



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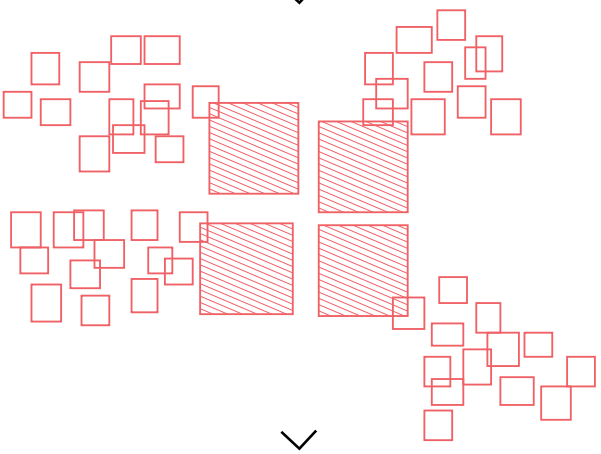

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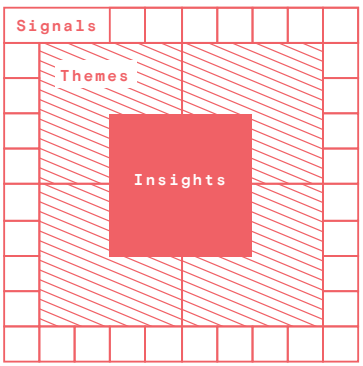
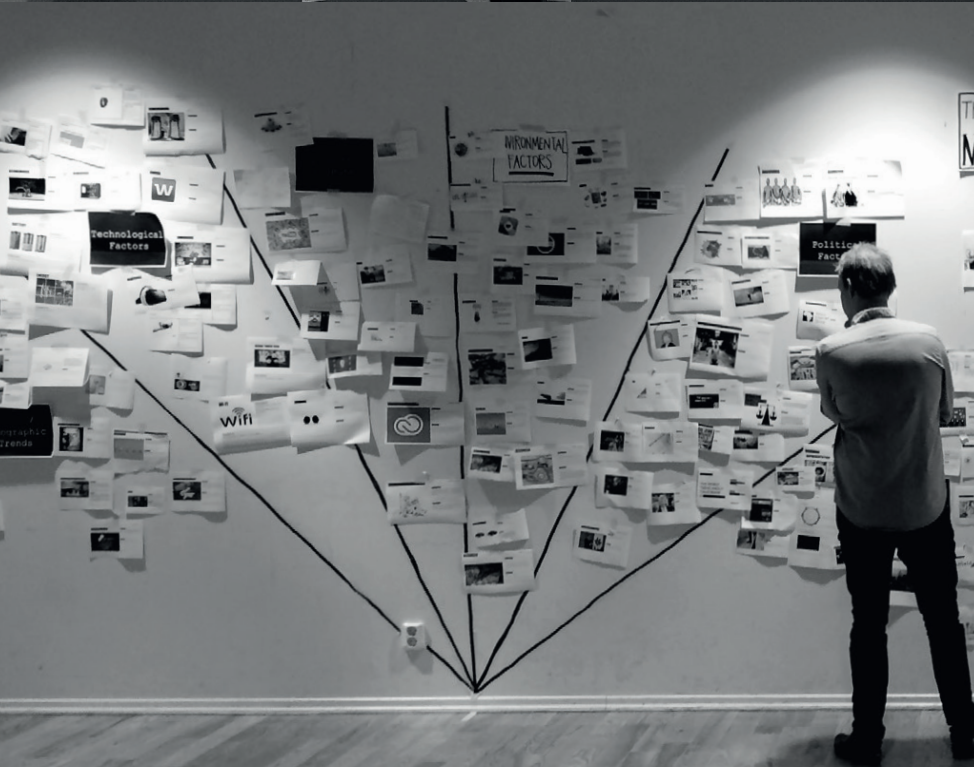


03

ENVIRONMENT
POLITICAL
E-GOVERNMENTS
FUTURE


ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS
Technological Factors
WiFi

techniques

An insight is like a joke. If you have to explain it, it is not that good.

Articulate insights

An insight is a phrase, statement or generative metaphor that serves as an initial spark to start imagining new scenarios for the future. As a platform for possibility, insights must be well grounded in a deep understanding of the situation and well articulated to uncover its meaning effectively to others. Insights use the power of language to cultivate and spark further imagination and creative thinking. Our collection of insights is the essence of the new understanding of our situation, and it acts as the foundation for the scale phase.

An insight formulated as generative metaphor, with a strong yet comprehensive verbalization as a provocative thought is a powerful catalyzer to make the unfamiliar familiar. Insights are critical for the transformation and evolution of the situation. The more powerful the insight, the more we are invited to look at the world with new eyes, and the more we can figure out n w ways for designing the future.

The task of articulating the insight is capturing the potential of the signals and their interrelatedness in a statement that people understand. How to name our new sense of awareness in a compelling way is the question for this phase.

The anatomy of an insight

Concise

How can you convey your awareness only in a few words, clear and comprehensive?

Relevant

How does the insight shine light on the present as well as set a direction for the future?

Punchy

How can you make it stick in people's head?

Specific

What is this insight talking about based on your findings?

Inspiring

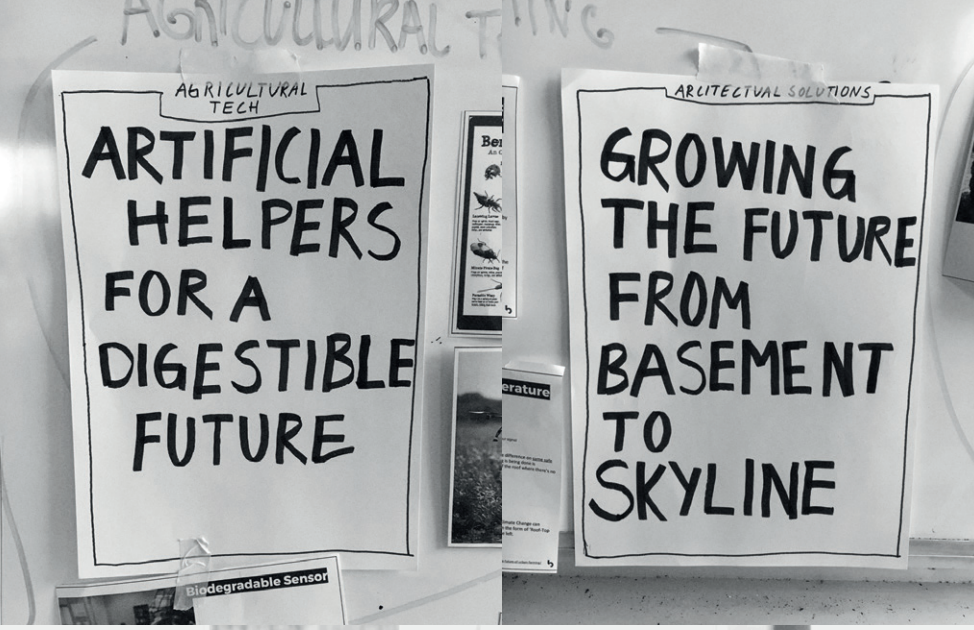
How can you articulate an insight in a way that it opens up for new opportunities, choices thoughts and reflections?

Analogies & Metaphors

How can you use sentences, rythm or expression from other contexts as medium to communicate your findings?

We are drowning in information, while starving for wisdom. The world henceforth will be run by synthesizers, people able to put together the right information at the right time, think critically about it, and make important choices wisely.

E.O. Wilson


AGRICULTURAL TECH
ARTIFICIAL HELPERS FOR A DIGESTIBLE FUTURE
ARCHITECTURAL SOLUTIONS
GROWING THE FUTURE FROM BASEMENT TO SKYLINE
Biodegradable Sensor

WE'RE USED TO THE DRIP BUT WE NOTICE THE FLOOD
Off
HDR Off
WHEN PEOPLE SEE OLD THINGS IN A NEW PERSPECTIVE THEY GET INTERESTED
PEOPLE LIKE TO ENGAGE WHEN THEY GET SOME THING OUT OF IT
WE'RE USED TO THE DRIP BUT WE NOTICE FLOOD
PEOPLE WANT SOCIAL
FROM PEOPLE THEY IDENTIFY WITH
RADICAL VOICES INSPIRE RADICAL CHOICES
VIDEO
PHOTO

go
beyond
the
trend

A trend is a manifestation of bigger changes underneath the surface. Be critical towards trends. Not bitter, not sceptic, just curious. Get inspired by others, look at what others are doing, have a curious attitude towards their ideas, but do not follow trends just because others do.

If you want to discover change, you can not only look at a superficial manifestation of a trend Understanding what is really making trends possible, is being able to look beyond. Look at the new emerging values, the new behaviours and cultural changes that people are experiencing. If you understand this new context, you will have a greater chance to solve real problems, satisfy real needs and design a meaningful and significant futur .

Don't be afraid of being bold and courageous to broaden the horizon of the possible, and find your own path towards it.

SC

ale

imagine futures • actualize the future

When John F. Kennedy became president in January 1961, the general opinion among Americans was, that the United States was losing the space race to the Soviet Union, who four years earlier with success had sent the first satellite in orbit around earth. The perception grew when Russian cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin became the first man in space during April 1961. Less than a week later came the Bay of Pigs fiasc , a failed attempt to overthrow Fidel Castro's communist government in Cuba, a failure that publicly humiliated the United States. Kennedy and the White House were convinced that the American strength and liberty would be secured through demonstrating technological supremacy. After consulting with NASA to identify such an achievement, Kennedy stood before Congress on May 25, 1961 with a very bold proposal:

»I believe that this nation should commit itself to achieving the goal, before this decade is out, of landing a man on the moon and returning him safely to the earth. No single space project in this period will be more impressive to mankind, or more important for the long-range exploration of space«.

In his speech Kennedy describes a scenario for the future of a nation. He commits himself and the entire country to a seemingly impossible goal.

If America had to land on the Moon in order to preserve a peaceful and free world, then landing on the Moon was an absolute necessity. It was a political need. James Webb, the space agency's administrator, had previously conceded to Kennedy that he believed it could be done, but the fact was, that NASA had absolutely no idea where to even begin.

As Kennedy came back to the White House, he said to his speechwriter, Ted Sorensen,

»*That didn't go over well, did it?*«.

And truly, the proposal wasn't greeted with immediate enthusiasm by the members of Congress. Kennedy spend a lot of effort trying to win the argument and convince Congress why going to the moon was of such importance. It wasn't clear until a couple of weeks later, if Kennedy would have the political support needed to get started on this adventure. But his declaration set in motion research activities, investments and technological leaps that in the following decade increased the chances of actually sending a man to the moon. And as the years passed, the scenario slowly took form. And finally on uly 20, 1969 Neil Armstrong stepped out of the lunar module *Eagle*, and felt the surface of the moon under his feet for the first tim . Three days later, the crew returned safely to Earth.

Kennedy's speech not only charted the course of NASA for a decade, it scaled up an idea of space travel to become an achievement, that still today, almost 50 years later, is a pillar in human history.

The future is like
an adventure that
you can design,
draw, imagine and
develop as you get
inspired by the
world around you.
One approach is to
do it on your own,
but the most
meaningful way is
by inviting and
including as many
others as possible
in the process.

Malene Lunder
Energy Academy
Samsø, Denmark

situate
define subject • situate playground
search
scope the search • scan for signals
sense
integrate signals • articulate insights
scale
imagine futures • actualize the future

Make it count

Until this point, the design process has been centered around a project team, a small subset of a larger organization or society. Together, future designers have searched and gained insight on the situation, its context and potential. Though, the ultimate intention is to make the work count and turn new insights into new scenarios that can create a positive impact.

The term *scale* originates in the Latin term *scala* meaning *ladder*. In the metaphor of the ladder, the current situation is the step, we are now standing on, and the futures design process aims to take us to the next step towards a new scenario for the future. In the scale phase, we seek to explore new scenarios creatively and include people around us as co-designers of the future.

Our medium for translating scenarios into action, is the design of new possible experiences that are provoking, inspiring and informative and aims to spark new reflection , discussion and actions.

In scaling, we distinguish between the two sub phases *imagine futures* and *actualize the future*.

Imagine futures

Our insights are formulations pointing towards possibility. They serve as a point of departure for the creation of future scenarios. In other words, if insights are our questions, scenarios are possible answers to those questions. Building scenarios is about developing a deeper understanding of the opportunities that our situation and new insights hold.

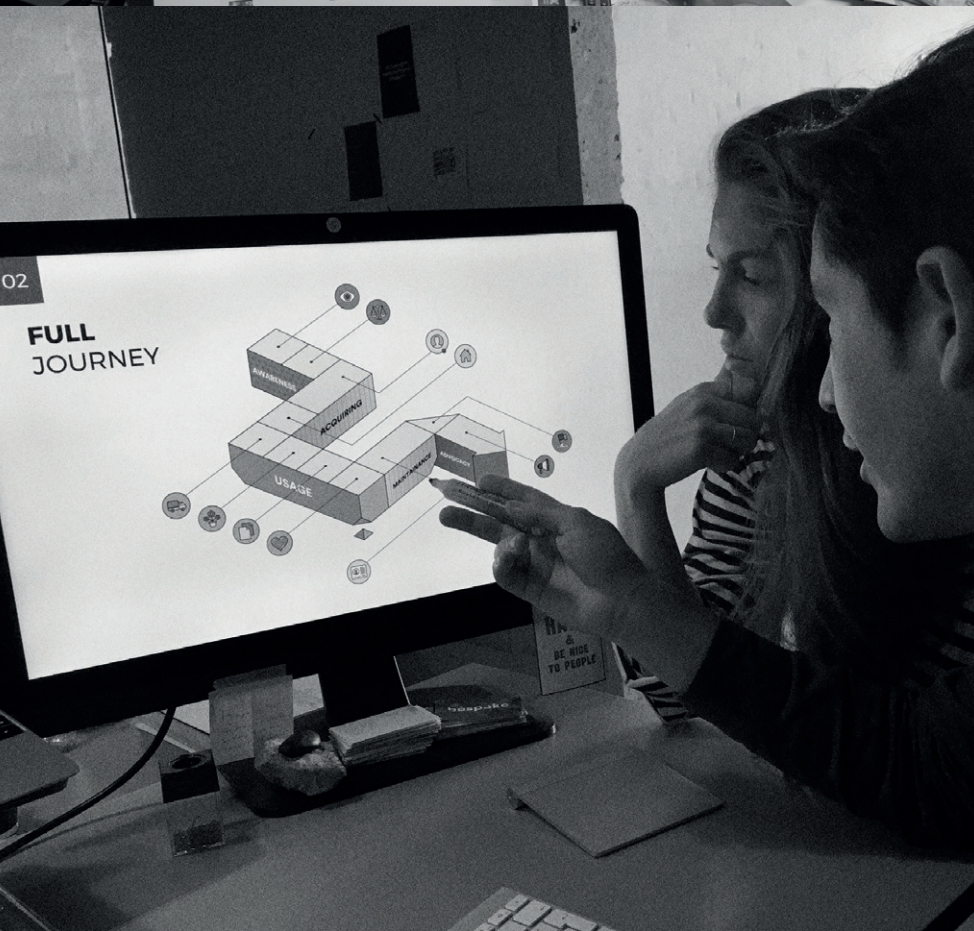
Insights paint new visions for the future that might give birth to new solutions, ideas, products, strategies or even poetical landscapes of possible futures. Insights make up the foundation for designing future scenarios for our project, organization, sector, industry or some other part of the world. Faced with the uncertainty of the future, anything is possible, and a representation of possible scenarios creates a foundation for forming a strategy of action. This strategy must provide a compass for avoiding undesirable scenarios and continuously navigating towards those that are preferable.

Employing insights to induce new scenarios is an act of cognitive, emotional and physical speculation. Looking over the material and paying attention to the potential of our insights allow us to paint new pictures and imagine future landscapes and see the situation and world anew.

The head and hands may work separately and/or together to combine and manipulate insights and signals, information and materials, the cognitive and the physical in order to manifest possible futures. The interaction between physical prototypes, art pieces, sketches, models, products, narratives on one side and experiences, mind sculptures and conversations on the other, hold a potential for exploring and imagining new hybrid structures. Through their origination in observed signals and insights, these hybrid structures become a reflection and critique of the past, but they also provoke and invite us to imagine what might be possible.

Speculative and provocative scenarios narrated through designed artefacts is a powerful way of facilitating and fostering imagination, emotion or debate, or criticizing and creating dialogue about futures that previously were missing. It is helpful to play *the what if game* and to author fictional story worlds that bring forth preposterous futures and help us unshackle ourselves from our past experiences. To broaden the horizon of what is possible we can extrapolate trends to the extremes, and play with words, paradoxes, dilemmas, materials and prototypes. Challenge what is and question what might become to escape the idea of a predetermined or projected future.

How to organize social innovation?


02
FULL
JOURNEY
AWARENESS
ACQUIRING
USAGE
MAINTENANCE
BE NICE
TO PEOPLE

Possibility may be the most powerful word in our language because it enables humans to visualize and strive for a future that neither is available in the present nor may have existed in the past. Possibility is like a time warp, allowing one to escape from the limits of our past experience into an unshackled future.

John Ehrenfeld

Design a landscape of possibility

Players

Who is involved in this scenario?

What communities, organizations and institutions are being included?

What do they value and treasure the most?

What do they fear?

Context

Where is this scenario taking place?

When in the future is this happening?

What is the historical, sociopolitical and economical landscape like?

Challenge

What need, problem or pain is this scenario addressing?

Mood and vibe

How does this scenario feel and look?

What are its emotional qualities?

Describe the scene and ambience.

Technology

What state-of-the-art technological advancements are impacting this scenario?

What is the relationship between people and technology?

Trends & counter trends

What major trends, drivers and forces are shaping the world?

What are counter trends, reactions and responses to these changes?

The possibility

Name the scenario and describe its potential

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Culture & values

What are the cultural values and principles determining people's behaviours and conducts?

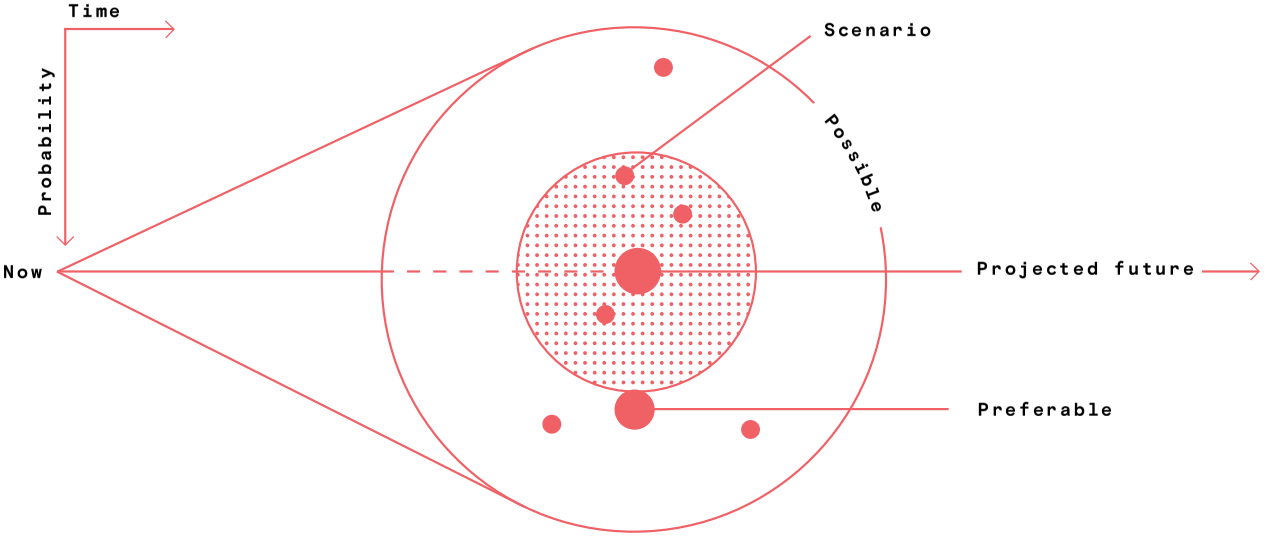
What does society value the most in this scenario?

The future cone

Transitioning from fictional ideas and specul - tive representations of imagined future involves an element of evaluation, qualification and strategizing. We use *the future cone* to position future scenarios in relation to each other, the *here* and the *now*.

The future cone illustrates the probability of future scenarios and connects them with the present. Even though it is impossible to predict the future, signals, trends and insights can help us estimate the probability that some scenario will become reality, or more importantly, how big an effort we have to make to actualize our prefered scenario.

At the centre of the future cone we find the projected future which is a direct continuation of the present, and extrapolation of current trends. The projected future is surrounded by a mass of scenarios that seem very probable. The outer rim marks the boundary between the possible and impossible future scenarios, and close to this we find scenarios that rely on n w knowledge to be developed, or extreme events to happen.


Time
Probability
Now
Scenario
possible
Projected future
Preferable

Elements of the future cone

Assessing the probability of scenarios is actually precluded by the inherent incertanty of the future. Though as future designers we do take the liberty to use social tendencies, generational arches and our insights in general to estimate how likely a scenario is. If a scenario is very similar to our current reality or is based on extrapolations of current trends, it should be placed close to the centre of the cone.

Anything is possible in an uncertain future, therefore the possible domain includes all thinkable scenarios. History has repeatedly shown us how our basic beliefs become myths of the past as philosophers, technologists and other thought leaders present new facts or perspectives that change our beliefs and world views. Future designers must take into account the emergence of new knowledge or unexpected events that makes the seemingly impossible possible.

The projected future defines the center of the future cone. This is the future scenario that epitomizes business-as-usual. It is basically the notion that tomorrow will be pretty much like today and the day after similar to that.

The preferable future is the future scenario that we want to actualize. Like JFK did in 1961 we can initiate actions that sets us on a course towards our prefered version of the future. What future designers must do, is to leverage their skills, resources and insights to change the world views, institutions, technologies and cultures that determine what is possible for individuals and organizations. By declaring a new scenario through products, services, perspectives, etc. we open the possibility for people to take action. Hereby, we increase the probability of the preferable future becoming the projected future.

Actualize the future

Futures design is an expansion of the domain of possible actions. It is forming new strategies for ourselves and our organization, and a choice of changing the status quo. Future designers are ultimately change makers.

Establishing possible futures as the actual future is a matter of leadership and influencing oneself and others to take action. Factors like formal power, organizational support and economic resources heavily influence the ability of future designers to initiate action. How people experience and perceive the scenarios, will determine how they engage in actualizing them. It is necessary for future designers to adjust the communication of scenarios to the target group, in order to effectively inspire those that need to be inspired, and efficiently in orm those that need information.

Through iterative design, we get a powerful tool to continuously adapt their actions to create impact. We adjust our actions and conversations to successfully engage listeners in actualizing a future scenario as the future reality. Depending on the people we interact with, we will adjust the method and radicalness when presenting the scenarios.

Whatever good things we build end up building us.

Jim Rohn

Abstract vs concrete

The declaration of possibility is a key tool to materialize our ideas. And finding the balance of details, certainty and room for imagination is an art of great influencer . In communicating scenarios we distinguish between *concrete* and *abstract* communication.

Behind the lines of Kennedy's space address, the US government had already assigned specific resources for the space program. Directors of key institutions had committed to specific and co - crete actions to secure the budget and acquire the knowledge to make the scenario a reality.

The abstraction was the speech itself. Rhetorics and story telling was a key enabler in making Kennedy's speech one of history's most famous declarations of possibility. Americans listened, was provoked or inspired by their president as he opened up their imaginations to a future with a man on the moon.

Concrete Scenarios

Possibility is most clearly stated through a declaration. When someone declares a new company vision, strategy of action, plan or similar, it opens up for a new path for the future. Like a sergeant's commands for his soldiers, concrete scenarios does not leave much room for interpretations of the direction and length of the next move. Being concrete helps people move along a predetermined track.

Abstract Scenarios

Art does not speak to us in words, art speaks to our emotions and sensory perception. Art lets us imagine something that we could not before. Abstract scenarios opens up for imagination and induce new thoughts. As such, art inspires us to create scenarios that ask questions of *what is possible* rather than giving answers to what is? Abstract scenarios change our approach towards our situation or inquiry, and it opens up for possibility.

Radicalness

Future designers must train their acuity towards the right articulation of future scenarios. Like the abstract vs. concrete scale, the perceived radicalness of scenarios is an important factor for engaging people in its realization.

The radicalness is both a scale of ambition and realism, and it must be balanced with the organizational readiness for change. Positioning the scenario as both ambitious and realistic is the creation of a possibility that is both exciting and safe for the others to engage in.

For some, a scenario of cars becoming a household possession, or walking on the moon, seemed both undesirable and unrealistic, but for scientist in NASA or Henry Ford, these scenarios seemed like future certainties.

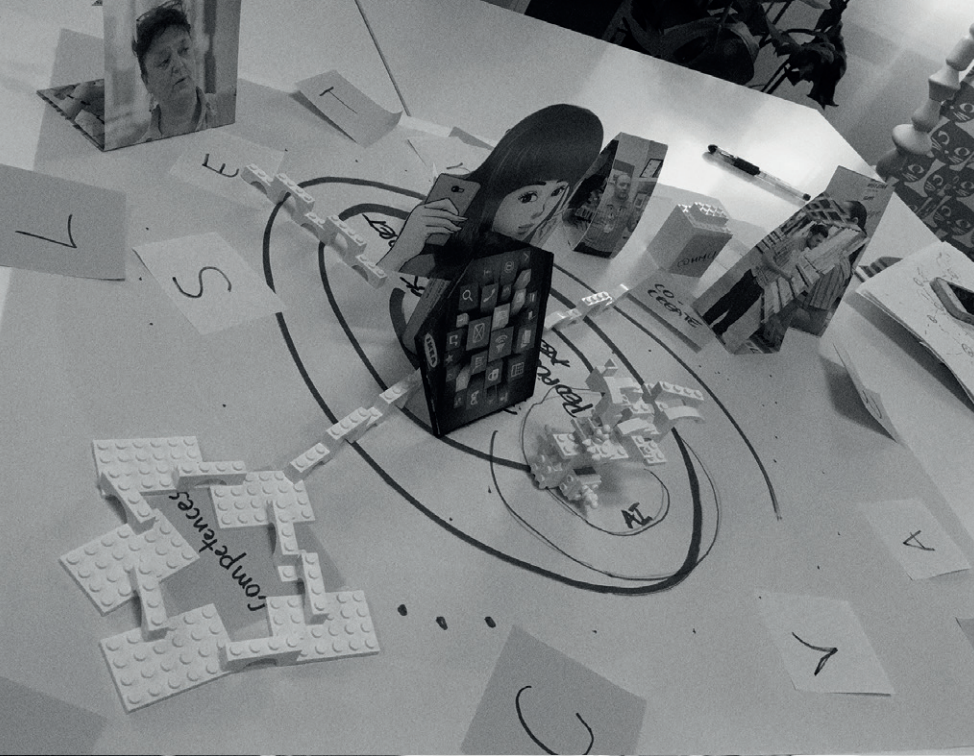
We distinguish levels of radicalness on a scale from projected through pragmatic, progressive to preposterous.

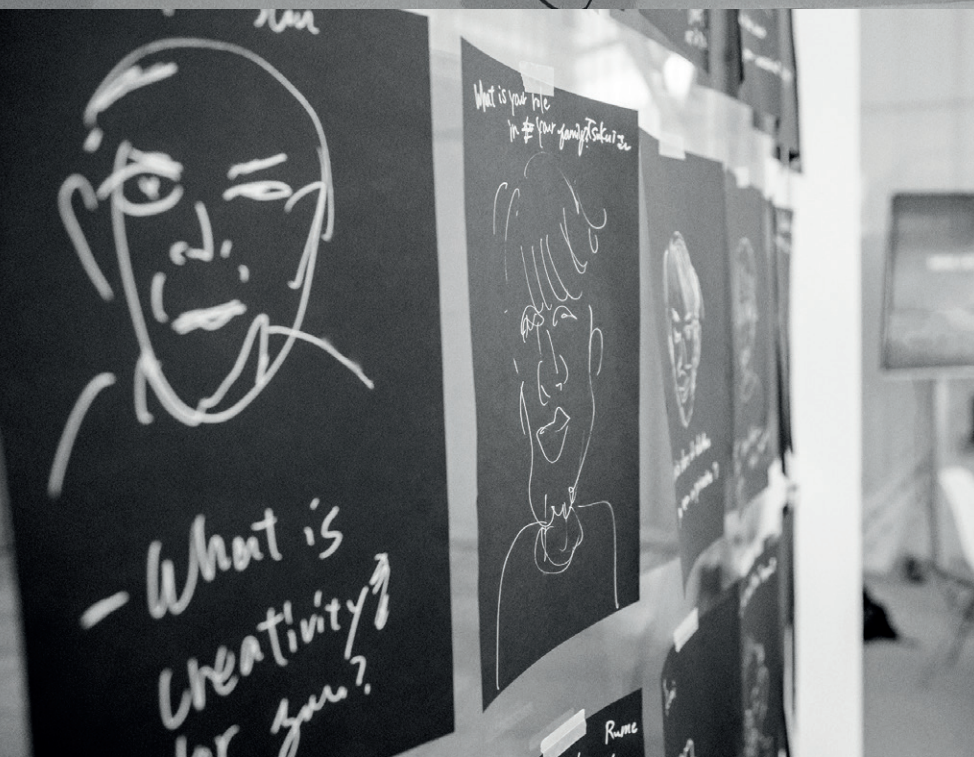
Preposterous
Scenarios question existing world views and suggest radical transformation of the context.

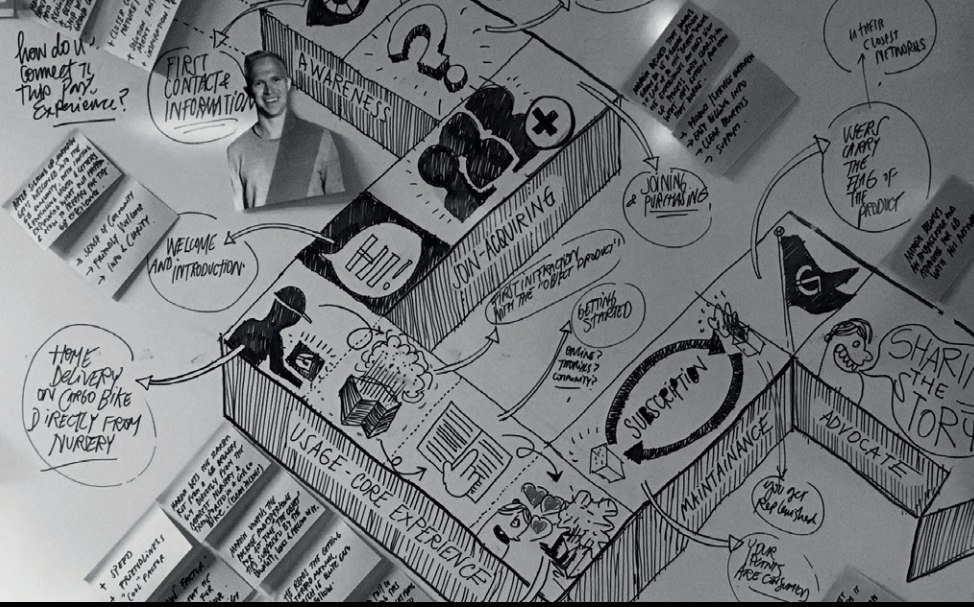
Progressive
Scenarios question basic assumptions and suggest changes to core elements.

Pragmatic
Scenarios assume some development of the context and suggest incremental changes.

Projected
Scenarios are a direct continuation of the present.


competence


- What is creativity for you?
What is your role in your family?



BITES

INTELLIGO

Pink Mushroom Reading Books

TOMORROW'S LAND

Mapping Future Landscapes

FUTURE VISIONS

Learning to Die

HUMAN AUGMENTATION

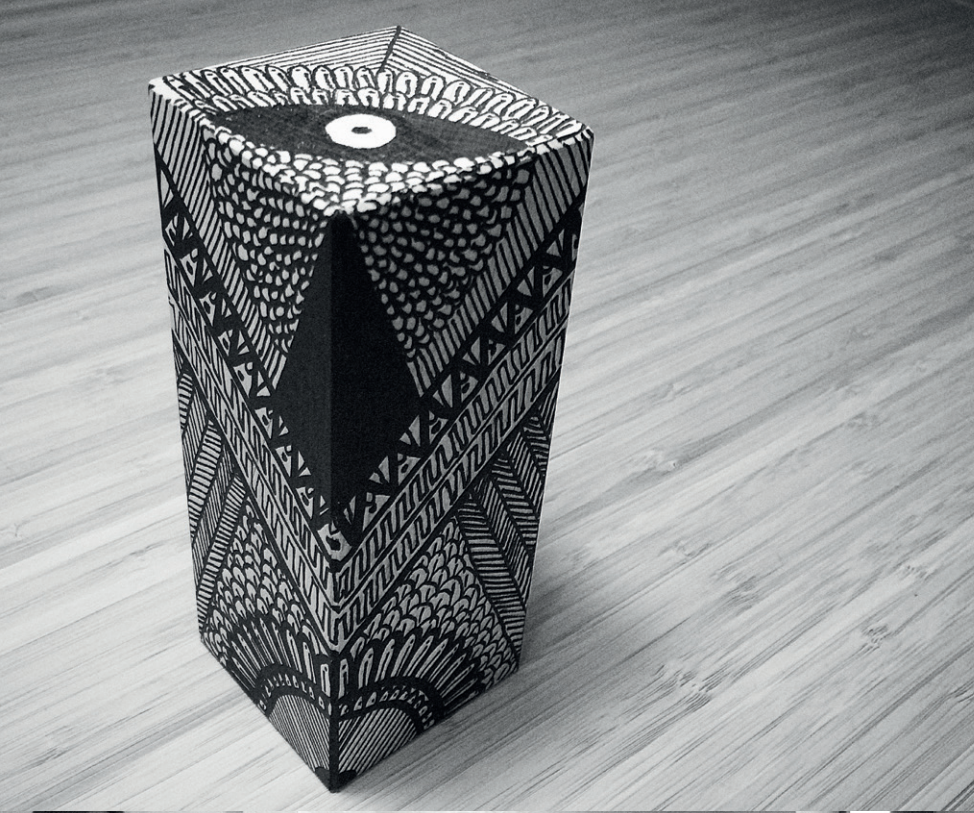
The Digital Nervous System

MATERIAL ECOLOGY

Building with Biology

MULTI PLANETARY SPE

Your Kids m Live on Ma



WHAT WE BRING BACK WITH JAPAN

ite

rate

iterate • iterate • iterate

Mastery & impact

Repetition

Repetition

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Repetition

Repetition

Repetition

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Summarizing the futures design framwork

Situate

Define subject
Unify perspectives and thoughts around the subject of study. Articulate research question, hypotheses, subject and/or challenge.

Situate playground
Define frames and practicalities of the project Make a brief, timeplan and team commitment.

Search

Scope search
Use existing knowledge to create strategy for the search. Delimit the search in a *scope wheel*.

Scan for signals
Explore relevant signals within the scope of the subject. Use desktop and immersive scanning to identify signals.

Sense

Integrate signals
Develop a new sense of awareness by mapping the relatedness of signals. Build a *scan map* and sense its potential.

Articulate signals
Capture the potential within signals to impact the situation. Articulate insight statements.

Scale

Imagine futures
Speculate, intellectualize, imagine and design new possible scenarios that unfold the potential of the insights. Materialize and develop scenarios through creative interpretation.

Actualize the future
Socialize and share scenarios with others in order to engage people and inspire action. Start conversations, gain feedback, initiate action, create new experiences.

Iterate
Iterate
Iterate

We are all future designers

Being a designer is more than just knowing how to use certain tools or how to make things look nice. At its core, design aims to actualize the possibility of a desirable future.

Being a future designer is having a curious attitude and a powerful and proactive creative mindset to challenge our cultural and social norms and boundaries, to re-think them, and from there, use our talents and skills to create the futures that we want to see.

No matter what we do, and in which industry or sector we do it, we all have a chance to challenge drift towards the projected future and turn our work and personal projects into an opportunity to design new scenarios for the future.

Let us regard the future as something that we all affect all the time, and engage in doing it right.

We are all future designers!

Humans are now,
more than ever
responsible for our
evolution and the
well being of life
on this planet.
It is our
responsibility
to design a more
just, sustainable,
and flourishing
future for the next
generations.

Manuel Manga
Founder
Institute for Evolutionary Leadership
San Francisco, USA

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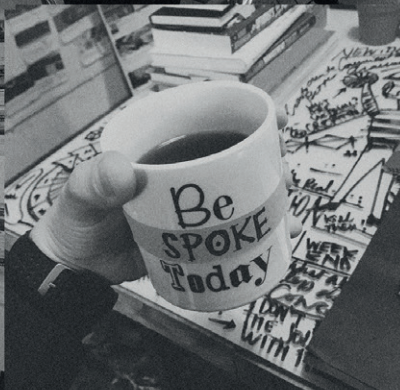
WHAT I LOVE
ABOUT IT

bespoke


Be
SPOKE
Today

bespoke

bespoke

DESIGN THE FUTURE
未来をデザインする
bespoke

bespoke

Bespoke is a Strategic Foresight & Experience Design firm located in Copenhagen Denmark. Our work aims to create meaningful new realities by designing the future, while using the power of cross-disciplinary thinking and doing. We do so by applying the principles, mindsets, practises and radicalness of art in the context of today's fast moving business landscape.

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Book of futures

a bespoke guide